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# **THE GROCERY TRADE**





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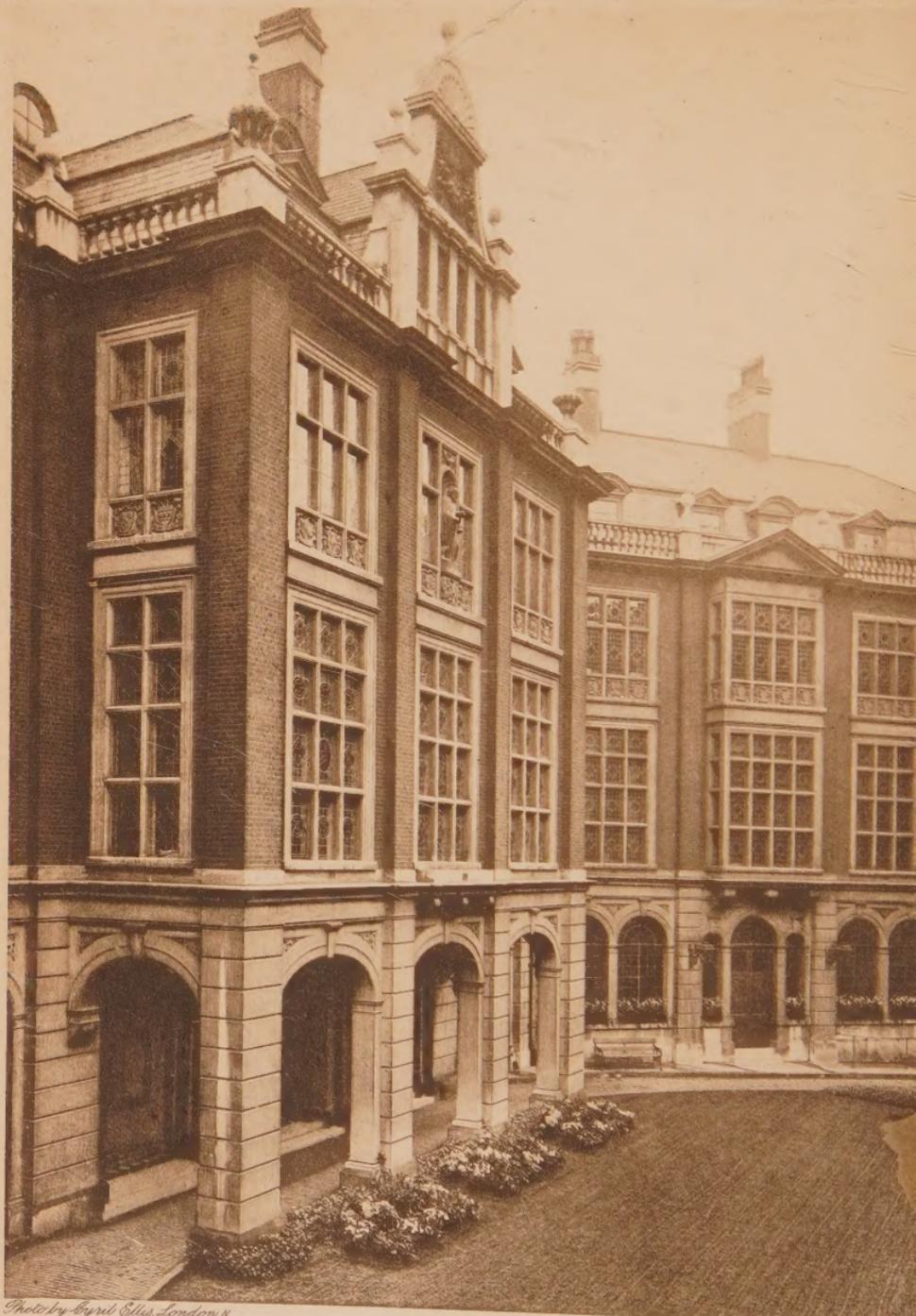


Photo by Cyril Ellis. London, N.

*Grocers Hall. London.*

# THE GROCERY TRADE ITS HISTORY AND ROMANCE

BY

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EDITOR OF "THE GROCER'S ASSISTANT,"  
FELLOW INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED GROCERS

VOLUME I



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VIAARUUDI OLOMUSY

TO  
MY MOTHER



## INTRODUCTION

IN a recently published biography of a great writer, the word "Grocer" is referred to as a term of reproach, signifying a "Philistine," or "one who fears the light." In this volume it is my object to show that not only is the grocer a most important member of the community, but that his trade can challenge comparison with any other calling in the matter of the number of men of eminence in Politics, Literature, Philanthropy and Civic Life, who have sprung up from its ranks. No less a personage than His Majesty King Henry VIII. honoured the trade by accepting the Freedom of the Worshipful Company of Grocers, while many of our nobility could trace descent from ancestors who purveyed groceries.

I little thought when I began the attempt to compile a reliable record of a great trade, that so many difficulties would have to be encountered; neither had I anticipated the extent to which the fascination attached to the work of research would grow, as obstacle after obstacle was surmounted and new facts were brought to light.

## INTRODUCTION

As these pages will show, the grocer has, for nearly six centuries, played a not unimportant part in English history. I have endeavoured to trace him from the time, when, in the fourteenth century, he first appeared in London annals, through all the subsequent changes up to to-day, when we find his class comprising so many thousands, and his wares arriving from all quarters of the globe.

Up to the end of the mediæval period, the grocer's customers were as few and select as the articles which he sold ; only rich people, in fact, were able to patronise him. Such groceries as were needed by the village communities were purchasable from the chapman who travelled from place to place, with his pack on his back. From the reign of Queen Elizabeth onwards we see the grocer and his wares gradually multiplying—stepping out, as it were, from the circumscribed sphere, and, responding more readily to the wants of the many, becoming established as a distinct section of the Shop-keeping class.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the surplus population of the villages went to swell that of the towns, and the great centres of industry sprang up, their necessity proved the Grocer's opportunity, with the result that his trade became indispensable to the community ; for, on the one hand, he received the constantly increasing varieties and quantities of the goods that reached our shores from over seas, while, on the other,

## INTRODUCTION

he satisfied the ever varying requirements of an ever growing population. He was still, however, many years distant from his successor of to-day ; he ground and wrapped his own pepper ; roasted his own coffee, and, later, blended his own teas. Few, if any, extended their outlook beyond their own town.

It was not, however, until the nineteenth century that the Grocer, no longer bound down by the Apprentice Laws of Elizabeth and the conservative Bylaws of Municipalities, nor handicapped by the fiscal barriers of the days of Protection, was able to give free play to his capacity for business enterprise, and embark upon the wonderful career of commercial prosperity which has placed his trade in the forefront of the Distributive Industries. But, whether with the growth and multiplication of the Universal Provider, or the Merchant Store-keeper, the Grocer, whom we saw enter in the fourteenth century, will be seen disappearing with the twentieth, is a problem which I leave my readers to solve. If, occasionally, we read his name in the Birthday Honours List, seldom, if ever, do we miss it from the Gazette List of failures.

Details of absorbing interest have crowded themselves upon my notice in compiling this work, but not the least gratifying part of the undertaking has been the assistance I have received from so many quarters. I am indebted, in particular, to

## INTRODUCTION

Dr. Reginald Sharpe, for his valuable aid in enabling me to make some extracts from the City Repertoires ; to Mr. R. V. Somers-Smith, the Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Grocers, for so kindly placing their records at my disposal and for facilities in connection with some of the illustrations ; to Mr. J. C. Tingey, honorary Archivist of Norwich, for his kindness in furnishing me with the records of the Norwich Grocers' Company ; to Mr. Arnold H. Miller, Town Clerk of Norwich, for valuable extracts ; and to Mr. George Gray, Clerk to the Grocers' Company of Glasgow, for useful information and documents. I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Chief Librarians at Bristol, Canterbury, Chester, Gloucester, Colchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Nor should I forget the obligations which I am under to Mr. William Martineau, Mr. W. H. Simmonds, Mr. C. L. T. Beeching and Mr. E. E. Newton for their help at various stages of the work.

My thanks are also due to many grocery firms for their courtesy in allowing me to examine the early records of their business. My one regret is that I have not been able, owing to the limited time at my disposal, to do full justice to the mass of material at my disposal.

LANGLAND BAY, *September 1909.*

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I IN EARLY ENGLAND

Trade in Anglo-Saxon Times : The Utility of the Fair : The Pedlar : Periodical Markets : Traders in Early England : The First Shops : Varieties in Trade : London and its Trade Marts : Restriction of Trade : Advantages of Freemen Pp. 1-13

## CHAPTER II SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

The Craft-gild : The Oaths of the Newcastle Spicers : The Pepperers' Gild of London : Prominent Pepperers : The Early Ordinances : Upholding the Honour of the Trade : The Cheesemongers' Gild : Ordinances approved by the Mayor : The Cheesemongers' Ordinances : Objection to Dairymen from Wales : Offences and Penalties Pp. 14-23

## CHAPTER III THE GROCERS OF LONDON

Cheapside in the Thirteenth Century : Sopers' Lane : Grocers' Porters : Their Duties and Remuneration : Formation of the Grocers' Company : Memorable Meeting of Twenty-two Pepperers : Their Singular Ordinances : Their Regulations *re* Apprenticeship : Election of Wardens : Foremost Grocers of the Day : William de Grantham : Roger Carpenter : John Hammond : Andrew Aubrey : Activity in Civic Life : Progress of the Grocers' Company : New Members added : Decisions *re* Admission of Women Pp. 24-40

## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER IV

#### THE GROCERS' COMPANY

The Year 1376 : Disputes amongst Londoners : The Fraternity of St. Anthony  
Petition to Parliament *re* "Merchants called Grossers" : A Notable  
Grocer of the Period : Nicholas Brembre : His Leadership of the Vic-  
tuallers : The Grocers draft New Ordinances : Establishment of a  
Court of Assistants : Grocers elect Representatives on the Common  
Council : Brembre's Influence with the King : John Philpot—his  
Miniature Navy : The Tragic Death of Brembre Pp. 41-49

### CHAPTER V .

#### MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

Derivation of the Name Grocer : Early Grocers as Ministers of Luxuries to  
the Rich : Foreign Wares : Introduction of Sugar : Miss Margaret  
Paston : Fixing the Prices of Food : The Sale of Butter : Pepper receives  
the Attention of Parliament : Disadvantages of the Traders : The Pillory :  
Evolution of the Early Retail Shop : Rent of Shops in the Fourteenth  
Century Pp. 50-62

### CHAPTER VI

#### PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY

The Grocers' Company and its Oversight of the Trade : Its Petition to the  
Mayor of London : Compulsory Garbling : The Duties of the Garbler :  
Foundation of Grocers' Hall : Grocers' Company incorporated : New  
Privileges : Management of the King's Beam : Goods weighed at the  
Company's Weigh-house : Tariff of Charges Pp. 63-71

### CHAPTER VII

#### SOME PUSSANT GROCERS

Illustrious Lord Mayors : Andrew Bokerel : Andrew Aubrey : Thomas  
Knolles : Robert Chicheley : Sir William Sevenoke : Sir Stephen Browne :  
Sir Thomas Canning : Sir John Crosby : Grocer Mayors of York  
Pp. 72-83

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER VIII

### MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

Conclusions : The Apprenticeship System : Duties of the Apprentices : Premiums paid : The Dishonest Apprentice and his Punishment : The Credit Grocer in the Fifteenth Century : Prices of Groceries : Contention between Members of the Trade : Powers of the Grocers' Wardens exercised : Disorderly Behaviour by a London Grocer : His Heavy Fine : A Grocer Victim of Fraud : The Grocers' Social Position : Margery Paston and her Marriage Pp. 84-97

## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

The Sixteenth Century and its Developments : The London Grocer of the Period : Thomas Lodge, Alderman : His Smart Manager : Visits to Antwerp : The Unemployed Assistant, and his Visit to London : Subsequent Rise to Fame : Shakespeare's Friends among the Grocers : Merchandise from Venice : References by Shakespeare thereto Pp. 98-114

## CHAPTER X

### TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

The Religious Changes of the Period : Grocers and the Army : The Grocers Company establish an Armoury : Prices of Groceries of the Period : Queen Elizabeth and the Sugar Monopolies : The Introduction of Starch : The Soap Monopoly : Civic Dignitaries test Quality : Formation of Soap Company Pp. 115-131

## CHAPTER XI

### TRADE GOVERNMENT

Regulating Prices : The Clerk of the Market : The Merchant Adventurers Companies : Local Companies of Traders : Norwich Grocers' Company : Their Regulations : Objections to Interlopers : List of Grocery Wares : Bylaws : Admission to Freedom : Regulations of Windsor Traders : A Darlington Grocer's Licence Pp. 132-149

## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER XII.

#### TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

The Grocers' Company's Power over the Trade : Their Searchers : The Cheesemonger and the Pillory : Punishment for selling Noxious Drugs : The Grocer and his Apprentice : Rivalry in Shopkeeping : The King's Grocer : A Royal Complaint : Inferior Sugar : The Lord Mayor intervenes : The Sugar-refiners of the Seventeenth Century : Their Objections to Foreigners : The Introduction of Tobacco Pp. 150-162

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### PAGEANTRY

Early Pageants of the Grocers of Norwich : Sale of the Properties : The London Pageants : The Spectacular Display in 1613 : The Cost of the Pageant in 1617 : Trade Features : Poetical Effusions in Praise of the Trade Pp. 163-176

### CHAPTER XIV

#### GROCERS AND EDUCATION

Educational Facilities in the Sixteenth Century : William Sevenoke : Guildford School—founded by a Grocer : Oundle School : Foundation of Rugby School : Lawrence Sheriff, "Purveyor to Princess Elizabeth" : His London Property : A Yarmouth Bequest : Other Schools founded by Grocers Pp. 177-187

### CHAPTER XV

#### THE MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

Spices and Voyages of Exploration : Foundation of Levant Company : A Currant Monopoly : The East India Company : English *versus* Dutch : Grocers identified therewith : Instructions *re* Quality of Spices : The King and his Pepper Speculation : Patent *re* Garbling : The Company's Progress Pp. 188-218

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GROCERS AND THE APOTHECARIES

Complaints *re* the Sale of Drugs : Apothecaries seek a Reform Charter : King James as their Champion : Sturdy Fight of the Grocers : A Royal Rap over the Knuckles : Foundation of the Apothecaries' Company Pp. 219-230

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE GROCERS' COMPANY AND PUBLIC DUTIES

King James and the Companies' Servants : Ship-money and Royal Rapacity : Grocers' Company and the Provision of Corn : Cromwell and the Grocers. Pp. 231-237

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

A Grocer Lord Mayor and the King's Return : Sir Thomas Allen's Pageant : The New Charters and the Writ "Quo Warranto" : Fire and Plague : The Harleian Miscellany and the Grocers of the Period : Petition of 1691 *re* Pedlars : A Country Grocer of the Period : Apprenticeship Fees : Opening Business Pp. 238-253

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RETAILER AND TOKENS

Harrington's Halfpence : Tokens made by Norwich Grocers : Devices on Tokens : A Curious Advertisement : Robert Orchard, the Handsome Grocer : Later Tokens Pp. 254-272

## CHAPTER XX

### NOTABLE GROCERS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Baron King, Lord Chancellor : Richard Grafton : Abraham Cowley : Sir Henry Keble : George Bowles : Sir Thomas Middleton : Sir William Hooker : Augustine Briggs : William Laxton : Daniel Rawlinson : Sir John Moore : Elkanah Settle's Effusion Pp. 273-288



## ILLUSTRATIONS

*To face  
page*

THE GROCERS' HALL, LONDON (1909) ( <i>Photogravure</i> ) <i>Frontispiece</i>	
A FEATURE OF THE PAGEANT, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	167
THE LEVANT COMPANY: AN EARLY WARRANT	193
EAST INDIA HOUSE, LEADENHALL STREET, E.C.	199
TOKENS ISSUED BY GROCERS, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	257
TOKENS ISSUED BY GROCERS, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	265
TOKENS ISSUED BY GROCERS, NINETEENTH CENTURY	267
ROBERT ORCHARD	269
SIR JOHN MOORE, GROCER, LORD MAYOR OF LONDON 1681	285



## CHAPTER I

### IN EARLY ENGLAND

THE Grocery trade in its many branches as we know it to-day, is, like our civilisation of which it forms a part, the product of evolution.

In all evolutionary processes the beginning is marked by simplicity, and the further we trace them, the more complex do the results become. This has been the case with our national life all through: it is likewise the case with that part of it represented by trade and commerce generally, and by the trade of the grocer in particular.

Of course but little material remains from which to put together a picture of trade as it existed in England, in Anglo-Saxon times. The annals which have survived and come down to us, scanty as these are, deal, as might be expected, with events of greater apparent importance than the happenings in direct connection with trade, and with personalities famous in church and state, rather than noted for their contributions to the furtherance of commerce.

In fact, trade and commerce were but simple and

## THE GROCERY TRADE

primitive affairs in those times ; and the medium of exchange was not so much money as barter.

But as the life of the nation became more civilised and the needs of individuals of all classes grew in extent and complexity, trade arose. All investigations point to the fact that the earliest form of retail trade, that is, the distribution of comparatively small quantities of commodities to the mass of the people who actually used them, was effected by means of pedlars and of fairs. At the same time, in connection with the towns, the permanent markets held at frequent intervals grew up—but of that more anon ; the fair should first claim our attention.

The fair is the typical institution of undeveloped commerce. Its advantages are obvious, for, as Thorold Rogers pointed out, its object was two-fold. It supplied a market in which goods which could not be found in the ordinary town markets were procurable ; and one in which there was a wider scope for getting rid of ordinary goods. As the trader did not exist in the villages, the fairs were great periodical centres of barter and exchange of the produce of the surrounding country-side, for goods imported from afar.

The farm bailiffs attended fairs to buy their annual stores of pepper, of iron goods and of tar, for example ; and to dispose of the produce of their farms, such as wool, hides, cattle, hay and corn.

Moreover, the fairs offered great opportunities

## IN EARLY ENGLAND

to those who were large buyers to lay in their stores for the year. Thus the manciples of colleges and the great abbeys scattered up and down the country-side, often at great distances, as things went then, from towns, would attend the fair to buy the winter's provisions and replenish their stock of salt and spices, of wine from Spain, of furs from the Baltic, or cloth from Flanders.

The stewards from the surrounding castles and great houses found in the fair the opportunity to buy such luxuries as their masters and mistresses used in those days—such as cloth of fine texture, silks, jewels; as well as the wine, and the salt necessary for preserving provisions for the winter, spices, groceries, and so on. For some of these things such as wine and salt, the demand came from almost all classes; whilst for others, customers were found only amongst the wealthy and frequenters of Court. Much tallow was in request for making the candles universally used in churches and elsewhere; and wax for the seals of lawyer, court or monastery. All these things were brought to the fairs and offered in sale or exchanged there.

Associated with the buying and selling there was, as lingers even now, much pleasuring. This points to the origin of the fair at an earlier time, when its development into an occasion of trading and bartering was by no means foreseen or contemplated.

The very name of fair comes from “feria,” the Latin name for the holiday on which the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

people assembled at the church or in the churchyard for religious purposes. These assemblies were accompanied by feasting and merrymaking—from them arose perhaps the old custom of “church-ales”—and wherever numbers of people were gathered together, it was but natural that the soberer spirits and those with an eye to business, should engage in that most primeval of all practices, the bartering of their superfluities in exchange for those of others. In this way trading, associated with the feast, recurring at regular intervals, gradually became the fair. One can almost see at a glance how the necessity for the legislation which regulated and safeguarded the fairs arose. When people of all sorts and degrees were assembled, indulging in refreshment and chaffering with one another, there must soon have arisen a need for the intervention of the law and its officers, if order was to be kept!

Thus the fairs quickly grew to be great centres of trade to which resort was had by merchants and traders and pedlars and chapmen of all sorts and degrees with the object of doing business, either buying or selling, or replenishing stores and stocks for use or subsequent sale.

In the interval trade was by no means neglected, as we can gather from the few and scattered notes in contemporary writings. The villages would be visited by the pedlar, who would barter his wares with hunter, fisherman, smith, farmer, or shepherd.

## IN EARLY ENGLAND

As showing how a familiar word of the language may come to mean totally different things at different periods, I may note that the travelling pedlar, the Chapman of those days, was frequently called a "mercer." Mercer (probably derived from the French *mercier*) originally signified pedlar, the huckster who dealt, not in silks, but in miscellaneous goods of all kinds, toys, trinkets, spices, drugs, and a varied collection of small and stray commodities. It is curious to note, too, that the names by which these itinerant traders were known are of early English origin; thus "chapman," "pedlar," and "huckster," are for instance, of considerably earlier origin than "grocer," the genesis and present use of which will be dealt with further on.

That the pedlar was ubiquitous and that he was a popular visitor around the scattered hamlets, villages and homesteads may well be supposed. He retailed news, gossiped with the farmers' and labourers' wives and daughters, and was a species of tradesman and morning-paper rolled into one.

Chaucer hints that the wandering Friars on their begging excursions did not disdain to engage in trade; and in his work on the Franciscan Order, Professor Brewer mentions that when that Order degenerated "the Friar combined with the spiritual functions, the occupation of pedlar, huckster, and quack doctor."

The author of *Piers Plowman*, Old Will Langlands, confirms this:

## THE GROCERY TRADE

For thai have noght to lyve by, then wandren here and  
there,

And deel with dyvers marche, right as thai pedlars were.

So much then for the early developments of trade in the villages. In the cities and towns it took a different form according to the influences which it encountered.

At the opening of the twelfth century, besides London there flourished such noted cathedral cities as Exeter, Winchester, Chester, Norwich, Lincoln, York ; and prosperous seaports such as Bristol, Southampton, Dover, Dunwich, Lynn, Grimsby, Hull and Newcastle. Here were likely to be centres of trade from the very necessity of the case, for the citizens would have a deeper veneer of civilisation than the country-folk, their wants would be more numerous, their tastes more refined.

In the towns the market held on certain days of the week became the great centre of retail trade. From a very early period markets had been established in convenient situations. Even in Doomsday Book the market appears as the natural complement of the manorial economy.

By the thirteenth century, the lord of the manor counted the market as one of his most profitable appanages. There were three conditions which made the holding of a market legal ; namely, a suitable position to which public access would be free and unfettered ; the grant of the right to hold

## IN EARLY ENGLAND

the market by the King ; and the regulation of the market and the receipt of the market dues, by the Lord of the Manor. The latter duty he was not at all likely to neglect.

The periodical markets served pretty much the same purpose, at least in the villages and smaller towns, as do such markets to-day.

In the cities, the markets also resembled those of our own at Smithfield, for instance ; and every few weeks saw a collection of cattle gathered together for sale from near and far.

As the importance of the market thus developed, so, in accordance with all evolutionary process, the constituent parts began to be more and more highly differentiated. That is to say the butcher, the cheesemonger, the baker, haberdasher, the spicer, and all sorts of separate and distinct trades came into being. To cite but one example : that of Colchester. The rolls of Parliament for this town in the year 1305 include varieties of tradesmen as follows :

3 Spicers.	6 Girdlers.
16 Shoemakers.	5 Marmers.
13 Tanners.	4 Millers.
10 Smiths.	4 Tailors.
8 Weavers.	3 Dyers.
8 Butchers.	3 Fishermen.
7 Bakers.	3 Carpenters.
6 Fullers.	

## THE GROCERY TRADE

To minister to these and a probable population of 2000, there were twelve clergymen; and to provide for material wants there are also enumerated, besides those named, one or more of the following traders: mustarders, lorimers, linendrapers, coopers, cooks, tilers, barbers, brewers, vintners, ironmongers, and old-clothes dealers.

It must be noticed that some of these trades were of a manufacturing nature, that is to say the trader carried on the making and the sale of his commodities at one and the same time. As early as the reign of King John (1199-1215) there is extant a list of some thirty towns in which, for example, a trade in dyed clothes had been carried on for nearly half a century before. From the Pipe Rolls it is apparent that the town population included weavers, fullers, bakers, lorimers (*i.e.*, saddlers and armour platers) and cord-wainers (*i.e.*, bootmakers).

The arrangements of the shop at this period were made with a view to facilitate manufacture on the premises. The dwelling chamber was in the upper storey, over an apartment used as a workshop; and the goods were exposed for sale on a bench beneath the overhanging upper storey or in the porch.

In the early period, as we should expect, the separation between the various varieties of trades was much less marked than it became in mediæval times and later. As we have said, the divisions

## IN EARLY ENGLAND

became more distinct in a gradual manner. The first line of cleavage seems to have been between the tradesmen who dealt in eatables or those connected with the victualling trade and those who confined their attention to articles of clothing and the like. That this is so seems to be indicated by arrangements which later appeared in connection with some of the traders' fraternities or companies.

Thus at Reading, the Victuallers' Company comprised vintners, inn-holders, bakers, brewers, butchers, fishmongers, chandlers, and salters ; whilst the Mercers' and Drapers' Company included mercers, drapers, haberdashers, chapmen, tailors, and cloth-workers.

The same broad division of trading interests obtained also in London. Trades "hung together" and at times there was no little jealousy between the respective parties. Thus in the fourteenth century there was for some time a bitter feud between grocers and drapers—which arose, however, more as a matter of social reform than from trade disputes.

As "birds of a feather flock together," so the tendency was for tradesmen of a certain class to settle in their own particular quarter of a city or town. Very early indications of this localising of various trades are apparent from the names which almost from time immemorial have clung to certain localities ; and from notices scattered up and down our old chronicles. Thus Fitzstephen, a monk and

## THE GROCERY TRADE

secretary to Thomas a Becket in A.D. 1150, wrote in reference to London :

“ This City even as Rome is divided into wards, and all the sellers of wares, all the workmen for hire, are distinguished every morning in their place in the street.”

In London, for instance, there was the West Chepe, now Cheapside, where among other things, bread, cheese, spices, onions, garlic and poultry were sold by dealers, the retailers of those days. Eastcheap was then the resort of butchers and cooks. The East End of Cheapside is still called “ Poultry.” Much of the business was done at little wooden stalls, not more than two and a half feet wide, ranged along the roadside. Other towns and cities as Bristol, Canterbury, and Edinburgh, can similarly point to their old trade landmarks. Both Chester and Nottingham possess a “ Pepper Street,” Canterbury its “ Mercery Lane,” Norwich its “ Spicery Row,” Reading its “ Shoemakers’ Row,” and so on.

To trade within the cities, however, was not a privilege extended to any comer indiscriminately—as we shall see. Thus, when Edward II. in 1319 granted a Charter to the City of London, it was enacted that “ merchants who are not of the freedom of the City ” should not “ sell by retail wines or other wares within the City or suburbs.” This freedom was jealously guarded. It was

## IN EARLY ENGLAND

enacted that “ no inhabitant and especially English merchant of mystery or trade, be admitted into the freedom of the City unless by surety of six honest and sufficient men of the mystery of trade that he shall be of, who is so admitted into the freedom, which six men may undertake for him of keeping the City indemnified in that behalf.”

The same precautions were taken in other cities and towns in England which, as they grew in importance, attracted strangers anxious to trade within their gates. We find that Canterbury, Bristol, Oxford, Hereford, Winchester and Chester enforced local laws barring the stranger from so trading.

Thus in Canterbury, only freemen were allowed to trade within the City walls ; if journeymen of various trades, not being citizens, desired to reside in the city and to occupy themselves in their crafts, they were only admitted on sufferance, and had to pay an annual fee for the privilege until they could afford to purchase their freedom. In the meantime they were called “ intrants.” There is in the ancient MSS. of Winchester a record of the right to carry on the craft or mystery, of a tallow chandler, being purchased by a gift of twelve silver spoons, while the right to carry on the mystery of a silk weaver was purchased by a silver caudle cup. These “ gifts ” may still be seen in Winchester. The ordinances of Norwich not only provided that all the members of a craft were to be

## THE GROCERY TRADE

enrolled citizens of the City, but that “foreigners,” were only to hold shops under tribute and fine for two years and a day, after which they were forced to purchase the franchise of the City. “The Master of the craft,” the ordinances provide, “shall come honestly to his shop and give him warning to be a freeman, or else spear in his shop windows.” He was given fourteen days to obey the injunction, and if still refractory, the master, with an officer of the mayor, again visited him with his spear, to “spear in” the window; and “he speared in, nor no other, shall not hold his craft within house or without.”

In Chester, exclusive right to trade within the borough was only granted to members of a gild, but, at a later date, traders who were not members of a gild, were admitted on payment of an annual fee, such traders being known as “unfree” or “non-free”; and civic officials called leave-lookers were appointed to collect the fees from these unfree traders.

From what has already been said it will have appeared that even in the very early times of English commerce the monopolistic spirit—that great enemy of trade—had made its appearance. The history of our ever-growing trade has often been the record of fights with that enemy. This will appear incidentally in the course of further investigations. However, we are not concerned with the general history of commerce. Our purpose

## IN EARLY ENGLAND

is simply to trace, in the midst of the evolutionary processes which have made our great English trades what they are to-day, the genesis and rise of one specific division of those trades, that of the **GROCER**.

As the articles in which the grocer was to specialise grew in number, in importance to the community, and in the quantities of each imported, so did the grocer himself emerge from the mass of other trades, acquire a distinctive name and style, and take up his well-defined place in the community. The nation began to need the grocer and in turn the grocer served the nation—"mutual service for mutual advantage." How the grocer has worthily carried out his functions—and how, as is fitting, he has attained in many cases to eminence and distinction and an honoured place among his fellow citizens, it is now our task to relate.

## CHAPTER II

### SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

SINCE the origin and development of the grocery trade, in the early times of which we have spoken, is intimately connected with the craft-gilds of the mediæval period and their successors the Companies of London and other places, I must crave the indulgence of my readers for a word or two about these famous gilds.

The Middle Ages might almost be described as the age of associations. Not one merely but three or four classes of gilds flourished at that time, and our social order has its roots deep down in the history of these organisations. There was the *frith-gild*, or peace-gild, out of which grew the town or commune with its government. Next came the gilds merchant. Then came the trade craft-gild. The whole of the traders in a town were banded together first in the Merchants' Gild. The "gild merchant" of Macclesfield—established 1261—was one of the earliest of those institutions. But as the trades increased in number the traders concerned gradually segregated into craft-gilds.

## SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

This movement was greatly encouraged by Edward I. during the latter part of the thirteenth century. As it developed other laws were applied in the same direction of trade organisation. An ordinance of Edward II. required every citizen to be a member of some trade or mystery.

The craft-gilds were not merely trade unions in the current meaning of that phrase, they were organisations for industrial self-government, the basis of membership being the practice of a common trade. They not only laid down the laws whereby the trade should be carried on, but rigorously excluded from exercising the calling all those who had not served a seven or ten years' apprenticeship. It is probable that in these craft-gilds, the origin of the City Companies is to be found.

Buried in the records and ordinances of these gilds, we find the earliest references to the fore-runner of the grocer, namely the *spicer* or *pepperer*.

In the mediæval ages, there came from India, along various routes either across Europe or *via* Egypt and the Mediterranean, the cloves, nutmegs, mace, ginger, frankincense, canella and pepper—spices eagerly welcomed by a people whose food was coarse and often unwholesome. Spiced drinks and spiced foods were greatly in vogue, especially among the wealthier classes, and the increasing demand for these spicy ingredients led to the creation of a new class of traders known as spicers. These spicers, in common with other traders,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

formed themselves into gilds for the protection of their trade interests. Early in the thirteenth century we find a gild of spicers at Newcastle, which Gild, with the Gild of Mercers and Drapers, was federated together in the Merchant Adventurers' Company of Newcastle and claimed pre-eminence over other local gilds. The curious oath taken by the spicers on admission to the gild is a significant indication of the bond of brotherhood that existed among these traders. The spicer when initiated swore as follows :—

“ This hear ye, wardens of the craft of spicers that I shall leyly and trewly observe and kepe all goods rewles and actes made or shall be made by the said Wardens and the most part of this felo-ship of spicers and that I shall no manner of (wares interlined) occupy that belongs unto the craft of (grosser interlined) spicers bot alonly myn own nor know no manner of man and occupye nc manner of spicers perteyng to the craft of spicers bot yffe he be als free as I to the said craft of spicers, and if I shall know any persones so doying or occupying agains the said occu-pation of spicers I shall make it known to the said wardens of spicers within owres next fol-loeyng without any conselement. So helpe me God and trelidom and all his hallowes and by this boke.”

There was also a Spicers' gild at York, while at

## SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

Canterbury, I find traces of a gild of grocers, apothecaries and chandlers.

By far the most important of these early gilds, however, was the Pepperers' Gild of London. An early reference to this gild appears on the Pipe Roll of 1180, where it is recorded that it was fined sixteen marks because it was constituted without warrant.

The origin of this gild of Pepperers is shrouded in obscurity. Some historians assume it to have been directly descended from the "Emperor's Men", or Teutonic Society, which established itself in the tenth century on the bank of the Thames near Dowgate, and which paid an annual rental to the crown of ten pounds of pepper.

Whether this be so or no we have abundant evidence that the gild exercised an important influence. Many of its members attained to public eminence during the thirteenth and succeeding centuries. Prominent among the Pepperers who served the City as M.P.s may be mentioned John Gisors (1283), William de Leyre (1299, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1319), Benedict de Folsham (1327-1337), John de Bureford (1328), and Andrew Aubrey (1338-1340). The office of Mayor of London was held by Andrew Bokeril, Pepperer, for successive years, while John Gisors was Mayor in 1245, 1248, and 1259.

It was during the Mayoralty of one of these eminent Pepperers that we find the earliest use of the word "Grocer" at present discovered. It occurs in a report in the City record for 1310 in

## THE GROCERY TRADE

connection with the appearance before the Mayor of William Chamberlain, Apprentice to John Guter, "Grossarius" of Sopers Lane.

That the Pepperers were scrupulous of the honour of their calling is evident from a perusal of the ordinances which they framed in 1316, and which show that while the gild itself had no right to regulate the practice of its trade, it could do so by consent and approval of a superior authority, namely, the Mayor and Aldermen of London.

The record, which is headed "ordinance of the Pepperers of Sopers' Lane", commences with the statement that "these are the points" which the good folks of Sopers' Lane of the trade of Pepperers, with the consent of Sir Stephen de Abyndone, Mayor of London, John de Gisors, Nicholas de Farendone, and other Aldermen, have made for the common "profit of all the people of the land," that is to say, Simon de Corp, John de Hereford, William Salrain (here follow the names of twenty-eight others) "on Wednesday next after the feast of St. Philip and St. James (May 1st) in the ninth year of the reign of King Edward, sone of King Edward." The ordinances provided :

"That no one of the trade, or other person in his name or for him, shall mix any of the wares, that is to say, shall put old things into new, or new things with old, by reason whereof the good thing 'may be impaired by the old; nor

## SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

yet things of the price, or of one sort, with other things of another price or of another sort.' "

"That no person shall *sub* any manner of wares ; (that is to say to arrange various bales as to make the ends of the bale contain better goods than the interior and thus deceive the buyer)."

"That no one shall moisten any manner of merchandise, such as saffron, alum, ginger, cloves, and such manner of things as may admit of being moistened, that is to say, by steeping ginger, or turning the saffron out of the sack and then anointing it or bathing it in water, or any deterioration arise to the merchandise."

"That every vendor shall give to his buyer the thing that is on sale by the hundredweight of 112 pounds to the hundredweight, 15 ozs. to go to every pound save things confected and powdered are to be sold by the 12 ozs. the same as always been the custom. Also that all their weights shall agree the one with the other."

Two things are clear from these ordinances : that the pepperer did not confine himself to the sale of peppers, but included spices and confectionery among the articles he dealt in ; and also that he used both the *peso grosso*, or avoirdupois weight, and that which afterwards came to be called the apothecaries' weight.

The end of this old Gild of Pepperers, to which the London worthies previously referred to doubt-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

less belonged, is not, so far as I can trace, recorded in so many words. It probably, however, coincided with a heavy loan extorted by Edward II. in 1338, from the Lombards within his dominions. This caused eventually, the ruin of the Italian Merchants, who had settled in and given their name to Lombard Street. The most influential of these, the Bardi and Beruzzi, held out to the last, but finally failed in January 1345. This was a severe blow to the Pepperers and their allies, whose trade lay with the East, and it is noteworthy that from this time the name of Pepperer ceases to be distinctive of a gild.

Another curious document which throws much light on the *rôle* of the Companies is that of the Cheesemongers' Gild. In 1377, the fifty-first year of Edward III., certain Ordinances of the Cheesemongers were confirmed by Nicholas Brembre, the then Mayor sitting with his aldermen in full Common Council. These Ordinances were presented by "reputable men of the trade of cheesemongers," and provided that "foreigners" (*i.e.*, those who were not citizens) bringing cheese and butter into the market for sale, should only be allowed to offer it in two markets, Leadenhall, and St. Nicholas Shambles, near Newgate, and that before noon. They were also forbidden to sell it to hucksters. The third point is also noteworthy.

"Also—divers bersters \* of cheese from Hamme,

\* Huckster, male or female hawkers.

## SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

Hackney, and the suburbs of London, are wont to go to divers markets, and to buy up and fore-stall such wares, which ought to come to the hands of the working men in London, and go about through divers streets in the City, and sell it to the great damage of the Commonalty ; saying and affirming it is the produce of their own cattle, and of their own making ; they do pray therefore, that from henceforth such fore-stallers, regrators, and bersters, and all other vendors of cheese, or of butter, foreigners or freemen, shall be charged to sell the same at one of the said markets, on the pain aforesaid."

This ordinance is full of meaning to the student of trade and of the time. One can imagine that the idea of the "working men in London," and their opportunity to obtain food at the lowest price, would appeal to the City Magnates who confirmed the ordinance ; and at the same time the cheesemongers did what they could to keep the sale of the food within their own hands. Curious is it too, to note that the hawker, who buys the cheapest of imported eggs and, dressed in country garb, hawks them around the suburban houses as "new laid from his own hens" is not unknown at the present time.

The said reputable Cheesemongers \* also had

\* It is worth noting incidentally that the word "cheesemonger" was once a peculiar name given to the First Lifeguards, a title presumed to have been applied to them

## THE GROCERY TRADE

their eye upon certain dairymen from Wales who sought through unauthorised channels to secure the custom of the Londoner for a Welsh cheese called “Talgar.” These Welshmen, it appeared, had “their serving men lying-in-wait in the city all the year through, and when any one from Wales brings talgar cheese to the City for sale such men go and make false suggestions to the dealers in such cheese, and they subtly regrate the cheese in private, and then sell it by retail to the commoners, without it coming to such market.” Therefore the City cheesemongers urge that they should “be charged to bring their wares to the said markets in form and on the pain aforesaid.” That the immigration of the Welsh has continued through many centuries is evident from the many Joneses, Morgans, and others who at present almost monopolise the dairy shops in the metropolis.

The same reputable cheesemongers, jealous for the good of their trade, were also mindful of the frailty of human nature. They not only appointed inspectors to oversee each member of the trade, but restrained the inspectors from taking undue ad-

prior to the Peninsular War because of their almost exclusive service at home. It is on record that the officer commanding the regiment at Waterloo when leading his men to the charge called out “Come on! you d—— cheesemongers.” The command was complied with so readily that this title was restored, but was no longer regarded as a term of reproach.

## SPICERS AND PEPPERERS

vantage of their position. Each inspector was enjoined to make due examination of his office, without laxity or doing wrong to any one. It was also stipulated that they were not to "forestall" anything to their own property, the penalties for deviation from this rule being £5 for the first offence, £10 for the second offence and for the third offence 30 marks, *i.e.*, £13 6s. 8d. Needless to say these fines meant vastly more than than the same mean now. In many other particulars these comparatively remote times were analogous to our own day. The human nature we have inherited was much the same then as now.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GROCERS OF LONDON

WALKING through the City of London in the middle of the fourteenth century, that picturesque period of our early history, we should have seen the clothiers displaying their wares for sale in Cornhill ; in the Poultry we should have found the poulterers ; while in the “ Cheap ” our eyes would have beheld the mercers, cordwainers, and goldsmiths plying their trade. All along Cheapside, itinerant traders would be selling their fish and other goods, shouting their praises meanwhile to the passer-by. Branching off to the left from Cheapside and turning down Sopers’ Lane, we should at once have been arrested by the familiar aroma of peppers and spices, and here we should have seen the business premises of the predecessors of the present-day grocers. Outside the shops, the apprentices who, as Stow tells us, were made to wear blue cloaks in summer and blue gowns in winter, with breeches and stockings of white broad cloth, and flat caps, would be shouting their wares and urging the passers-by to purchase

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

the various articles offered for sale. A Benedictine monk, John Lydgate, who visited London, at a later period, refers to these cries in a poem entitled "London Lyckpenny" where he says :

Then unto London I did me hie,  
Of all the land it beareth the prize,  
"Hot peascodes!" one began to cry ;  
"Strawberries ripe!" and "Cherries in the rise!"  
One bade me come near and buy some spice ;  
Pepper and saffron, they 'gan me bede ;  
But, for lack of money, I might not speed.

The rents of shops in Sopers' Lane, the chief resort of the Grocers, varied considerably during this period. It was customary then, as now, to lease business premises for the term of years, and I learn from the City Records that in 1310 while some shops were leased at 7*s.* per year, one shop was leased to a Pepperer for 20*s.* per annum, and another at 54*s.* 8*d.* per annum. As a comparison it may be noted that rentals of shops at Bath varied at this period from 4*s.* per annum to 12*s.* per annum, the latter being a shop "with an upper room."

In Sopers' Lane itself the grocers' porters would be seen at work handling bales and boxes much as they do nowadays, albeit the boxes and other packages might have had a somewhat less neat and more foreign look. On August 18, in the third year of Richard II. (1379), a covenant was made between Richard Eylesbury and William Culham "Masters of the Mystery of Grocers of London"

## THE GROCERY TRADE

with certain five porters, to the effect that the five would serve the mystery of Grocers by themselves and by their deputies, and would have on every working day "six men at least in Sopers' Lane and Bucklersbury, always ready to serve the said Mystery," and that they would take for their trouble (travaille) in manner as follows:

For these goods double:

Soap in case	Saltsmouth, 1 barrel
Anise, 1 package	Cummin, 1 package
Rice, 1 package	Raisins of Corent, 1 barrel
Dates, 1 large bale or "Gymew."	

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

Prices were also agreed upon for loading and unloading various wares from the ships which brought them to the wharves on the river.

In Sopers' Lane such porters' work for the grocers had then to be done in early hours and cleared away betimes. In the preceding century after noon had chimed it was customary for a sort of fair to be held in the Lane. "Fripperers" or dealers in old clothes resorted there in large numbers —perhaps to buy odd articles and coverings from the foreign bales there unpacked. Thieves and other undesirables also were attracted ; until the "fair" became such a nuisance that in 1307 it was abolished by proclamation. If we had passed through the ancient thoroughfare on the 12th day of June 1345, we might have discovered the fact that the London Pepperers, though their gild had ceased to exist, still realised the need and advantage of association. As we passed down the Lane, our attention would probably have been attracted by some City merchants of the period wending their way in the direction of St. Mary Axe. Curiosity might have led us to follow them, and we should at last have found ourselves at the entrance of the town mansion of the abbots of Bury, a house with several fine rooms and surrounded by a good-sized garden. Standing near the entrance we should have seen, one by one, no fewer than twenty-two Pepperers of the period entering the building. Many causes may have led

## THE GROCERY TRADE

them to convene the gathering. It was an age of fraternities of men in similar trades and crafts binding themselves together for spiritual and secular objects. The mercers, the weavers, and the fishmongers had already formed themselves into imposing combinations, whilst smaller crafts like the Armourers, the Pursers, the Spurriers and the Pouch Makers were also alive to the value of organisation. It must also be remembered that according to the Charter of Edward II. already mentioned, "no inhabitant and especially English merchant of any mystery or trade" was allowed to be admitted as a freeman of the city "unless by surety of six honest and sufficient men of the mystery or trade that he shall be of." Not only in London but in many of the smaller towns the associated crafts were assuming the reins of local government. The growth of the craft organisation meant the growth of power and influence in the councils of the City. Considerations of this kind would therefore lead the pepperers to conclude that their interests demanded collective action and at an earlier meeting, namely on May 9, the promotion of a Fraternity had already been agreed upon.

Having entered the mansion, the twenty-two pepperers adjourned to one of the large rooms and sat down to dinner, it being evidently the belief then as now, that a dinner was the most attractive method for facilitating important business transac-

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

tions. At this dinner, to the cost of which each member contributed a shilling, they must have found many things to engage their attention.

In their "introductory remarks" they would probably lament the collapse of the old Gild of Pepperers which had been in existence as early as the twelfth century. They would refer with gratification to the fact that so many worthy members of craft had already risen to eminence in the City, notably Sir Andrew Bokerel, Sir John le Gisors, Sir Alan de la Zouche, Hammond Chickwell and Andrew Aubrey, each of whom had occupied the position of chief magistrate, while the latter had also represented the City in Parliament.

Another topic was probably the unfortunate war with France which Edward III. was then engaged in, and which they little foresaw would last far into the next century. They would doubtless discuss the political situation, and wonder what new developments were likely to arise in connection with Parliament, which, as a deliberative assembly representing the nation, was yet in its infancy. King Edward III. had been on the throne eighteen years. He had recognised the value of the trading classes, and in order to show the deep personal interest he took in their welfare, had already associated himself with one of their companies—the Linen Armourers—thus raising them in the public estimation and setting an example which was to place on the records of the various companies in later times the names of a constant

## THE GROCERY TRADE

succession of titled members. The diners would know nothing of it, but we now know that at the date of this early dinner of the Pepperers Geoffrey Chaucer, the “Father of English Poetry” was a young London lad of five years of age, while Wycliffe, whose fiery zeal in the cause of religion was to bring him into conflict with the heads of the church, was a young man of twenty-five and a Fellow of Balliol College.

The dinner itself was no doubt a tame affair in comparison with modern banquets of the City Companies, but it was not short of rarities. It probably consisted of two or three courses, of which the first dishes would be roasted swans or rabbits with cabbage, followed by delicacies towards which the “spicers” themselves had contributed not a little. One such delicacy known as payn puff was made of marrow, yolk of eggs, minced dates, raisins and salt. Light wines and ale would be the beverages. The dinner over, the company would settle down to the business which had specially called them together, namely the formation of a trade company.

The chair, we may be sure, was occupied by William de Grantham, whose name in the records of the company, heads the list of signatories to the first ordinances. He and his friends duly discussed the objects and constitution of the new “fraternity,” and, as a result of their deliberations they decided to enlarge the scope of the proposed new society so

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

as to include those allied traders, “the spicers of the Ward of Chepe and the Canvassers of the Ropery.” The latter class of traders, who dealt in all appliances connected with shipping, had naturally many direct dealings with the Pepperers in oversea transactions, whilst the former were no doubt synonymous with the retail grocers of the present day. It is significant, therefore, that the Pepperers sought to admit both these branches of their calling into the new organisation. At the meeting we are referring to, they committed to writing the particulars of their formation into a trading fraternity, and they settled upon certain ordinances under the title of “The Fraternity of St. Antony.”

In these ordinances it was laid down that :

“No person shall be of the Fraternity if he is not of good condition and of this craft, that is to say, a Pepperer of Sopers Lane, a Canevacer of the Ropery or a Spicer of the Ward of Chepe, or other people of their mystery, wherever they reside, and, at their entrance, to pay at least 13/4 sterling or the value thereof; and, in good love and with a loyal heart, shall submit for their obedience toward all those who shall then be of the fraternity.”

The Ordinances further provided that members were to be of good fame, and so continue under pain of expulsion.

It may be noted that the entrance fee to the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Company was fixed at 13/4, with a subscription of one penny per week towards the cost of a priest who was engaged to pray and sing for the Company. Eighteen of the twenty-two pepperers assembled paid each a year's subscription in advance.

What most strikes one in reading the early ordinances of the Company as settled at this inaugural gathering, is the businesslike procedure which seems to have been adopted, and the amount of business actually got through. For example, they made rules as to the taking of apprentices by members of the Fraternity—a matter of especial interest for us in these days when the revival of apprenticeship is so much debated. Any member taking an apprentice was to pay 20s. to the Common Box, and apprentices on the expiry of their term might become members of the fraternity on payment of £2, on condition that they found surety for good conduct. They agreed to meet annually on St. Anthony's Day to hear High Mass, and appointed a priest to celebrate it. They arranged for an annual dinner, and even settled the price of it—members of the Livery to pay 3s. 6d.; those who kept shops but who were not of the Livery, to pay 1s.; those out of town to forfeit 2s. 6d. They also provided for works of charity and benevolence, to be performed towards members of the Fraternity who met with misfortune. It was laid down that members should loyally support each other in any case of dispute

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

with a third party ; while disputes with each other were to be redressed by the Wardens of the Company, and not by an outside tribunal. They were enjoined to assist any brother who became poor through business misfortune ; and it was stipulated that in the event of one of the brethren dying and "it happens that he has not left a sufficiency to bury him according to his station," the expenses were to be met, for the honour of the Fraternity, out of the Common Fund. They also arranged that the members should be clothed once a year in a suit of livery.

Finally they elected two Wardens in the persons of Richard Oswyn and Lawrence Halliwell.

Thus came into being the Grocers' Company—a company that was destined to exercise a powerful influence on the trade and City of London for many centuries, and which is now privileged to number among its illustrious members His Majesty King Edward VII.

It may be noted in passing, that within the next twelve months, death overtook one of the original members, by name Geoffrey Halliwel, and at the next annual assembly in 1346 his son Lawrence Halliwell piously delivered to the Fraternity, for the use of their chaplain, a silver chalice and a vestment, alb, maniple, stole, and chasuble, "together with the corporal and a small missal," on condition that the soul of his father should be prayed for by those maintained or assisted by the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Fraternity for ever. The gifts were accepted and the requests granted accordingly.

Before proceeding with the Company's history we may take a glance across the centuries at some of the great men amongst the Grocers of that day, who thus gallantly served the good cause of trade organisation. Foremost among those who took a leading part in the formation of the Grocers' Company was William de Grantham, one of five brothers, several of whom were actively engaged in the grocery trade. A man of wealth and influence, his liberality and breadth of mind are amply demonstrated in his will. Among his bequests we find sums of money left to the poor of the hospitals in Southwark, Holborn and Westminster, to the prisoners in Newgate, to the lepers residing around London, and to every anchorite and hermit in London. He also left a hundred shillings (a very large sum in those days) in aid and maintenance of the Fraternity of Pepperers, for the keeping of his obit. At the time of making his will he was a widower, and as his brothers, John and Robert, had predeceased him, he left the utensils of his shop and house to a brother pepperer named John Genworby, a fellow member of the fraternity, and warden of the Grocers' Company in 1347; to whom he also bequeathed various tenements. The children of his brother John also came in for recognition.

The will of John de Grantham, William's brother,

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

who is also described as a pepperer, is still extant. It is dated "London, Friday after the feast of St. Mary Magdalen" (July 22, 1344). This pepperer was a man of substance. The will speaks of the chapel he had erected near the church of St. Antonin and provided for a chantry in connection therewith, to be charged on his tenements and wharf at Dowgate in the parish of All Hallows of the Hay. The possession of a wharf would seem to be an indication that the pepperer imported his merchandise, which is perhaps confirmed by the fact that by his will it is shown that he possessed property abroad. He leaves to his brother, William de Grantham, all his tenements in the town of St. Omer in Artois (France). After some charitable bequests, the will provides for his three sons, John, Thomas and William, by bequests of tenements and reversions in various parishes. Altogether, John de Grantham had property in at least six parishes as well as that abroad.

Another of the twenty-two pepperers was Roger Carpenter, whose will is dated March 24, 1348. He, it may be mentioned, was one of the two wardens of the Grocers' Company chosen to that office on July 6, 1348. By his will we learn that he had tenements and rents in the parish of St. Mary Abchurch, which he left to Thomas his son with remainder to his daughters; and tenements in the parish of St. Benedict Sharbogg. He also made bequests to his two apprentices, John

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Kynardeseye and Thomas, and the residue of his goods he devised in three parts, one to his wife, one among his children, and the third for pious uses.

Other notable early grocers and members of the Company include John Hammond, who joined it in 1346, and made a will dated the same year. This pepperer also had rents and tenements situated in four different parishes. He makes numerous charitable bequests, notably one of 40*d.* to every anchorite in London, and one penny to every prisoner in Newgate. He gives five marks to the work of building London Bridge. He founds two chantries (one for the soul of Adam de Salisburi, "late pepperer"), besides giving other gifts to other churches; and still can deal liberally with his wife and family. To John, son of the aforesaid Adam de Salisburi, he gives fifty pounds (probably enough to set him up in business) and all his weights, balances and other implements appertaining to his business of pepperer. Of much interest is the bequest of 60 shillings for clothing for the porters of Sopers' Lane (the fourteenth-century Eastcheap) and to each of the said porters and to every other labourer in Sopers' Lane, connected with the testator's business, twelve pence. John Hammond must have been a man of an ample substance.

We must also mention the name of Andrew Aubrey, who became a member of the Grocers' Company in 1346, having previously been twice Mayor of the City, which office he again filled in

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

1351. It was whilst Aubrey was chief magistrate that King Edward III., when going abroad, left powers to the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of London for conserving the peace of the City. And such powers were necessary, for soon after the King had gone, a strife between the Companies of Skinners and Fishmongers ended in a bloody skirmish in the streets. The Mayor hastened to the spot to arrest the ringleaders and was violently assaulted by one of these with a drawn sword, whilst another wounded one of his officers. The result was that the two resisters of lawful authority were beheaded in Cheapside, after trial before the Mayor and Aldermen ; and it is satisfactory to read that this prompt action of the grocer Mayor for the peace and safety of the citizens was warmly approved by the King on his return. Aubrey also was a man of substance, as his will (witnessed by John Nott and Henry Lacey, "Grossers" and dated October 3, 1349) proves. He had tenements in four parishes of the city ; and a leasehold interest in the manor of West Chalke, Kent, which he had from Sir John de Cobeham. He had previously built a chapel adjoining the church of St. Antonin, to which he had appointed a chaplain in his will ; and to him he left the mansion which he had built in the same parish.

The life of this grocer, Andrew Aubrey, proves that the trade was taking its part in the civic life of the period. There is ample evidence that this

## THE GROCERY TRADE

was also the case with others. About this time, for example, at least one grocer—Geoffrey Cremelford, an early member of the Company—sat on a special committee elected by Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty to examine the ordinances in the Guildhall, and to revise the same. And in 1376, when each “mastery” elected certain persons to serve as a Council for the City until the new Mayor should be chosen, the same Geoffrey Cremelford, who became an Alderman in 1383, was chosen with five others to represent the “Grossers.”

Returning now to the progress of the Grocers’ Company itself, we may note that its second assembly, in 1346, was again held at the mansion of the Abbots of Bury. The question of enforcing the claim of the fraternity came up for discussion on this occasion and it was agreed that the Wardens for the time being and their successors should have power to distrain upon the goods of those members “who shall act contrary to any of the ordinances, or shall refuse to pay what shall be imposed upon them by the resolutions of the Wardens for their opposition or other defaults, according to their deserts.” The wardens were to retain the goods so distrained, until satisfaction had been forthcoming from the recalcitrant member. This ordinance was sealed by the whole of the existing members. Nine new members were elected at this gathering, including Sir Andrew Aubrey, Simon Dolsely

## THE GROCERS OF LONDON

(Mayor of London 1359–1360) and Thomas Dolsely (M.P. for the City 1350, 1353–4). In 1347 six new members were added, including Nicholas Chaucer, a relation of the poet; and Sir John Grantham, who according to Stow, had a house in Thames Street “very large and strong, builded of stone, as appeared by gates and arches yet remaining.” Among its members also was John Notte, Mayor of London in 1363, who instituted a campaign against usury and passed a bylaw called “Notte’s Law against Usury.”

The assembly in 1348, which took place at Rynged Hall in St. Thomas, Apostle, was memorable for some momentous decisions relative to the position of women in the fraternity, it being very evident therefrom that the advocates of women’s rights were in the ascendant. The members agreed that it should be obligatory for each one to bring his wife or companion with him to the annual feast, except in case of illness; and that the charge for the dinner should be increased from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*, being 1*s.* 8*d.* for the member, 1*s.* 8*d.* for his wife or companion and 1*s.* 8*d.* towards the priest. It was also agreed that the wives of members should be entered in the books and should be regarded as of the Fraternity with equal claims upon their benevolence. Every such wife had the right, should her husband die, to attend the dinner so long as she remained a widow; in the event of her remarriage, with any one not of the Fraternity, she

## THE GROCERY TRADE

forfeited all claims to their assistance and her right to attend the feast. With the business of the Fraternity increasing it was deemed advisable to appoint a beadle to "warn and summon the company whenever he is desired by the Wardens." The funds, which had accumulated to £22 5s. 9d., were handed over to the new Wardens, and it was resolved that "from thenceforth the Wardens should not adventure over the seas, neither lend any of the goods of the Fraternity but at their own hazard."

During 1348 the Company obtained permission to erect a chantry at St. Anthony's Church in Budge Row, towards the decoration of which they were given a chalice weighing fifteen ounces and a missal which cost £3 6s. 8d. by Sir Simon de Wye, a parson from Barnes, who was admitted a member of the fraternity.

The assemblies of the Grocers' Company continued to be held from year to year at various places, till finally the fraternity settled down at the Cornet's Tower, Bucklersbury, where Edward III. had formerly kept his exchange of money. The Fraternity amended their ordinances from time to time, and grew in numbers and influence, till in 1373 it included no fewer than one hundred and twenty-four members, and attracted by its business operations the attention of Parliament. It was now on the eve of new developments.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GROCERS' COMPANY

THE year of grace 1376 found the Merchants of the City of London stirred by many conflicting interests. The wealthy traders of the City had grown in numbers and influence, and were becoming more and more hostile to the foreign merchants, whom they regarded as poachers on their exclusive trading preserves. The Londoners were not merely stirred by national and religious disputes, but were also agitated by questions of local administration. The citizens had formed themselves into two opposite camps. On one side were ranged the drapers, goldsmiths, saddlers and many other lesser crafts ; and on the other side, victualling trades, which included the pepperers and fishmongers. The dispute raged principally round the question of the election of the Common Council, the clothing party, known as the reforming party, seeking to establish a Council elected by the wards.

Prior to this conflict the “Fraternity of St. Anthony” had strengthened its position and had

## THE GROCERY TRADE

added over a hundred members to its roll, many of whom were influential merchants. They had also gradually extend their operations beyond the sale of peppers and spices, so much so that in 1363, eighteen years after their formation, a petition from the Commons in Parliament complained,—“that great mischief had newly arisen, as well to the King as to the Great men and Commons, from the merchants called grocers (grossers), who engrossed all manner of merchandise vendible, and who suddenly raised the prices of such merchandise within the realm ; putting to sale by covin, and by ordinances made amongst themselves, in their own society, which they call the Fraternity and gild of merchants (fraternite et gilde merchant) such merchandises as were most dear and keeping in store the others until times of dearth and scarcity.” The petitioners urged—“that merchants shall deal in or use but one kind or sort of merchandise, and that every merchant hereafter shall choose what kinds of wares or merchandise he will deal in and shall deal in no other.” An Act was accordingly passed, ordaining “ that all artificers and people of mysteries shall each choose his own mystery before the next Candlemas ; and having chosen it, he shall henceforth use no other ; and that justices shall be assigned to inquire by process of Oyer and Terminer, and “to punish trespassers by six months’ imprisonment, or other penalty according to the offence.” This Act, however, so far as

## THE GROCERS' COMPANY

it related to merchants, was repealed the next year.

Ten years later, 1373, we find the word "grocers" or "grosers" as applied to the Company appearing in their records.

Notable among the grocers of this date was Nicholas Brembre, who was Warden of the Fraternity of St. Anthony in 1369-70. In 1373 the King himself had deposed the Mayor, Adam Staple, and Brembre became Mayor in his stead. He was recognised as the leader of the victualling section, as against the democratic draper, John Northampton, who led the clothing section in the agitation for the reform of the Common Council. The dispute, in which Brembre was supported by the Court party, reached the ear of the aged and senile King, who, because of the disturbance of the peace in the City, threatened to bring the matter before Parliament. This pressure led the Mayor and citizens, who, whatever view they took, resented the interference of Parliament, to come to an agreement that the Common Council, should not be elected by the wards but "should be composed of persons of the wiser and more sufficient of the mysteries, elected by the men of the same mysteries and not otherwise." The result was that at a General Assembly convened by the Mayor on August 1, 1376, a Common Council was elected from among the members of the forty-one mysteries or trades, then in London. A commission of

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Aldermen and Commoners, elected by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty, was appointed to survey and examine the ordinances in the Guildhall and to present to the Commonalty those that were of benefit to the city and those that were not, and on the 9th August, 1376

“there came immense commonalty from the underwritten mysteries to the Guildhall before John Warde, Mayor, Wm. Haldene, John Aubrey, Bartholomew Frestkyng, Nicholas Twyford, John Maryna, John Haddele, Hervey Begge, Adam de St. Ive, Aldermen, and presented the names of the underwritten persons elected by each Mistery and deputed to serve as a Council for the City until the Charge of a new Mayor, and they were called separately for each Mistery and charged by their oath as follows :

“ You swear that you will readily come when summoned for a Common Council for the City unless you have lawful and reasonable excuse, and good and lawful counsel shall give according to your understanding and knowledge and for no favour shall you maintain an individual benefit against a common weal of the city, preserving for each mystery its reasonable customs.”

The “Grossers” so elected were Richard Odyham, Geoffrey Cremelford, William Culham, John Hothom, Adam Lovekyn, and William Wadsworthe. The mysteries represented were :

## THE GROCERS' COMPANY

1. Fishmongers.
2. Goldsmiths.
3. Skinners.
4. Saddlers.
5. Girdlers.
6. Embroiderers.
7. Tapestry-makers.
8. Weavers or "welbes."
9. Dyers.
10. Feathermongers.
11. Smiths or wrights.
12. Shearmen.

This agitation probably led the members of the fraternity of St. Anthony to consider the advisability of strengthening their Company and re-adapting it to meet the changed circumstances. Accordingly we find the pepperers and spicers meeting on August 29, to draft new ordinances. Having regard to the development in the Company's affairs they now term themselves "the Grocers of London." Besides their annual festival they arranged for quarterly meetings, "principally to treat of the common business of the mystery." The new ordinances also stipulated that membership of the Company should only be open to members or freemen of other mysteries on the payment of ten pounds and subject to the common assent. It is evident from this that the grocers had no inclination to allow other traders to participate in

## THE GROCERY TRADE

the privileges of their calling. At this gathering it was agreed that "for the relief of poor members of the Company, who shall become impoverished and for establishing other alms, every one of the Company shall give to the Common Box ten pence," and steps were taken for the establishment of a Court of Assistants "to assist and advise with the Masters."

After 1376, the Grocers' Company continued to share with other mysteries the privilege of electing representatives on the Common Council, and out of twenty-three elected in 1397, the grocers were successful in securing the return of three of their number, namely William Baret (Aldgate), Adam Karlill (Bishopsgate), one of the parliamentary representatives for the City, and Adam Lovekyn (Cornhill).

The victualling trades had now practically supreme power in the government of the city. The power of wealth had begun to assert itself. Rich grocers like Brembre, Philpot, Hadley and Karlill, and rich fishmongers like Walworth and Sibyle, were able to render financial assistance to the Government, and in return acquired the civic power they coveted. The times were hardly ripe for the popular control which men like Northampton tried to establish; and during the times that were then at hand there was need for strong government in the great and influential City of London.

## THE GROCERS' COMPANY

When Richard the Second came to the throne, after the death of his father (the Black Prince) and of the old King Edward the Third, he was but a boy of eleven years old. The government was in the hands of his uncles, at first of the autocratic John of Gaunt. Brembre, like Walworth and others, lent money to the crown, and so gained influence which procured the grant of a charter in December 1377 restricting retail trade within the city to the freemen of the City, and prohibiting all foreigners, excepting the merchants of Acquitaine (the Black Prince's French Duchy), from selling their goods to any other foreigner within the liberties of the said City. The Grocers' Company in common with seven others of the leading companies were instructed by the Mayor to elect searchers to see that the provisions of this statute were not violated. There is no doubt that the grocers, who were one of the largest importing trades and who were extremely jealous of the Venetians and other foreign merchants, welcomed this charter as a distinct acquisition. Free trade and unlimited competition were anathema to these monopolists.

Brembre's star being in the ascendant he began to exercise his power in many directions. John Philpot, another sturdy grocer, and William Walworth, the fishmonger, were other important strands in the tangled skein of politics of that day. These men were the great supporters of the Court, and of the favourites of the young King, against

## THE GROCERY TRADE

whom the people became at length so justly enraged. When, in 1381, the peasants of Essex, Kent, and elsewhere, marched into London under John Ball and Wat Tyler, it was these men who stood around the boy King, when Walworth slew the people's leader ; and when by his audacity and his smooth promises—never kept—Richard had appeased the peasants as they stood dazed and uncertain around him, he rewarded his friends with knighthood on the spot. Perhaps Walworth, the civic hero whose dagger is so jealously preserved by the fishmongers, would hardly be held in so much honour were it generally known that the scandal of his brothels in Southwark was one of the complaints the people had against him ; there was little of bravery in his treacherous act at Smithfield. Brembre and Philpot, the two grocers, were men who appear far worthier to be had in repute. Philpot at his own cost equipped a fleet and cleared some piratical Scots off the North Sea at a time when Richard's government was impotent. As for Brembre, having allied himself with the Court party he remained with it and followed Richard's fortunes. The reforming Northampton on one occasion obtained power in the City, but was speedily ousted ; and Brembre remained one of the leading men of the time until at length, as a hated favourite of the King, he came to a tragic end in 1388, being executed as a traitor to the Parliament.

With his death departed one of the most

## THE GROCERS' COMPANY

vigorous personalities of the early grocery trade, a victim to his own ambitious impulses, and one into whose mouth might fitly be put the utterance of Wolsey—

Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my King, He would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to my enemies.

His master, Richard the Second, was years afterwards deposed as history relates.

NOTE.—Although the members of the Grocers' fraternity were taking their full share in the government of the City in 1383, the assertion of some historians, including the learned Bishop Stubbs, that no fewer than sixteen members were at one and the same time Aldermen, is hardly correct.

The mistake arose from the not uncommon custom which then obtained of continuing the title of "Alderman" to those who had once held the office, but had since resigned. Such persons were accorded the designation as a mark of honour after they had really ceased to be entitled to it.

At Christmas 1383, as the Rev. F. B. Bevan points out, the actual number of Grocers who were members of the Court of Aldermen was eight, including the Mayor, who was not an Alderman of a Ward, but presided in the Court in virtue of his office. These were W. Baret (Cornhill), W. Venour (Castle Baynard), G. Cremylford (Langbourn), W. Staundon (Aldgate), R. Aylesbury (Dowgate), J. Furneux (Bread Street), J. Chircheman (Bridge), and the mayor Sir Nicholas Brembre, who had been previously Alderman of Bread Street Ward ; and was again elected to that office the next year.

## CHAPTER V

### MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

DURING the fifteenth century I find the word "Spicer" gradually disappearing as the name of a trader, and the word grocer being generally adopted. Various derivations of the term "Grocer" have been given, some attributing it to the fact that many of the leading members of the fraternity were dealers "in gross" (*en gros*) or in large quantities, while others incline to the rather far-fetched belief that it comes from the Latin or Italian name of the articles commonly sold by grocers—namely, Grossus, a fig. Another explanation is that which connected the grocer with the trade who used "peso grosso" or avoirdupois weight.

Personally I think all the indications point to the conclusion that the name arose through certain members of the trade, the Hansons and Travers of the fourteenth century, "engrossing" various kinds of merchandise, though they gradually relinquished dealing in goods foreign to the trade, as we understand it at the present day. It is recorded, for

## MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

instance, that an early bearer of the name grocer, Thos. Knolles, sold in addition to spices, wax and black soap, such articles as drugs, lead, tin, horns, woad, flax, sulphur and saltpetre.

The early Grocers were the ministers of luxuries to the rich, their customers being drawn principally from among the wealthier classes of the community, and the Court. The chief articles that they dealt in at the period were ginger, mace, cloves, cinnamon, almonds, raisins, prunes, dates, figs, rice, comfits and nutmegs.

As an indication of the width of the gulf between the grocer and the poor of those days, it may be noted that a skilled outdoor labourer lived on bread, herrings, milk, cheese and porridge, with ale on festive occasions, and when he could get it ! Fresh meat he rarely tasted. And the diet of the field labourer was even coarser and more scantily varied than this.

The burgesses in the towns, able to afford a more luxurious dietary, fed on meat, with pastry and puddings. For drink, ale and mead were consumed, and for the making of spiced ale and mead, resort was had to the Pepperers and Spicers, who imported the ingredients from over seas. At a banquet in the fourteenth century, boars' heads, peacocks, herons, swans, hams, tarts, jellies, "with gay gallantines and dainties galore" were served. When the banquet was over, dessert was spread in another room, consisting of spices, under which

## THE GROCERY TRADE

name were included almonds and dried fruits, with malmsey and muscatel wines. Spiced drinks were greatly favoured by the citizens of those days. From a receipt for "hippocras," the "company" drink of the Middle Ages, the brewer is bidden, if preparing it for a lord, to add well-pared ginger, thin strips of cinnamon, grains of paradise, sugar, and turnsoles; while for common people, ginger, cannel, long pepper, and honey are deemed sufficient.

Ships returned to London at this period laden with spices and dried fruits, among other things of rare and curious interest. A poem written in the fifteenth century and published under the title of "Libel of English Policy" refers to—

'The great Galléys of Venice and Florénce,  
Be well laden with things of complacénce,  
All spicery and all grocers' ware,  
With sweet wines, and all manner chaffers.

A Genoese ship, driven ashore on the coast of Somersetshire in 1380, contained amongst its cargo green ginger cured with lemon juice, dried prunes, bales of rice, bales of cinnamon, dried grapes, and sugar. A year earlier in the same century (1379) a wealthy Genoese merchant submitted a proposal to Richard II., wherein he suggested that Southampton should be made the chief port for the distribution of spices and other Oriental goods between Genoa and Flanders, Normandy and

## MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

other parts. Had this plan succeeded, it was estimated that pepper would have been sold in England at 4*d.* a pound and other spices at equally low prices. (Of course 4*d.* a pound in those times meant many times fourpence in ours.)

The London merchants, however, foreseeing danger to their position through such a rival, caused his assassination by a man named Kirkeley before he could carry his plan through.

Among the articles which, about this time, began to be a source of profit to the grocer was sugar. Sugar was introduced in the eighth century to Madeira and the Canaries, and gradually found its way to the West Indies through the medium of the Portuguese and Spanish settlers. The date of the introduction of sugar into England is uncertain. It is referred to in the cargo of a Venetian merchant sent to England in 1319. At the date 1417 the grocers' records show that loaf sugar was sold at 13*d.* per lb. It is also referred to in the year 1497 in a letter by Sir Edward Wootan from Calais, wherein he speaks of a purchase of twenty-five sugar loaves at 6*s.* each, which works out at 8*d.* per pound. In 1498 we find it included among groceries in the Goldsmiths' records, 6 lb. "loffe sugar" being purchased at 2½*d.* per pound.

A further indication of what were considered the proper ware of the grocer is afforded by the fact that during this period and until 1617 such drugs and medicines as were in common use were sold in

## THE GROCERY TRADE

England by apothecaries and grocers. The wardens of the Grocers' Company had the right of search in all the apothecaries' shops and frequently came into conflict with members of this trade over the quality of the drugs sold.

One cannot pass over the period without referring to an incident recorded in one of the Paston Letters. Miss Margaret Paston, the member of a wealthy family at Norwich, writing to a friend in London says : "send me word what price a pound of pepper, cloves, mace, ginger, almonds, rice, galingal, saffron, raisins of Corinth, greyns and comfits, of each of these send me the price of a pound, and if it be better cheap at London than it is here, I will send you money to buy with such as I will have." This letter is a clear indication that even in those days the wealthy classes were apt to overlook their local traders in favour of London merchants.

Several attempts were made by King and Parliament during these early days of commerce in England to fix the prices of food. In 1315 it was enacted that all articles of food should be sold at certain prescribed prices, with a view to relieving the famine then existing among the people. The result of this Act, however, was to limit the supply of food, as those who had goods to sell remained at home rather than bring them to market to be sold at a loss. Parliament recognised its mistake and repealed the Act a few months after it was passed.

## MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

In 1349, immediately after the great pestilence, another statute enacted that all dealers in victuals should be bound to sell the same for a reasonable price.

A curious regulation concerning the price of butter was made on June 11th, 1379, to the effect:

“That no butter shall be sold in the City without the *esquielle* which is to hold half a quart of *rightful capacity* in butter measure, on pain of forfeiture of the butter, and of the body (of the seller) being submitted to disgraceful penalty. And that every *esquielle* of such fresh butter shall be sold for  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$  and no more, between this and St. Michael ensuing, on pain of forfeiture thereof.”

It would appear that the sale of butter “by pint” as in Suffolk, has a venerable antiquity behind it! An *esquielle* (or *esquelle*) is a deep plate or porringer; from this word we get “scullery.”

Butter substitutes were not then invented, the poor citizen might be nipped in his quantity or overcharged, and so the Mayor, doubtless in conjunction with the Grocers’ Company, took steps to protect his humbler fellow citizens and honest tradesmen at the same time from unfair competition.

In a statute passed 1389–90, it was ordered that all victuallers “shall have reasonable gains according to the discretion and limitations” of the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

justices, while the prices of bread and ale were regulated by the assize.

Pepper, one of the chief commodities handled by the grocers of the period, also came in for the attention of Parliament. In November 1411, a petition had been laid before Parliament complaining of the scarcity of pepper, "the spice most used by the commons of the realm," owing to its being withheld from the markets by grocers and Lombards; and the petitioners prayed that the grocers might be compelled to sell it at a reasonable profit. The result of this petition is seen in a writ issued to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs on December 22nd, 1411, calling upon them to proclaim and cause to be observed an ordinance made in the last Parliament to the effect that pepper in the hands of any merchant should be sold to any one requiring it at 20*d.* per lb. until fresh pepper arrived from abroad, when the price might be lessened. The following year, however, pepper had risen to 4*s.* per lb., and in 1413 to 8*s.*; while in 1425 we find it was sold at the extraordinary price of 3*3/4d.* per lb.

During the next ten years we find it quoted at 2*s.*, 2*s.* 4*d.*, and 2*s.* 8*d.* per lb.

With such variations and uncertainties it is pretty certain that these embarrassing enactments, regulating the price of food, were resented as much by the grocers as by the dealers in food. Such enactments, if not repealed sooner or later, fell into disuse.

## MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

The keeping of a shop was not by any means an unmixed blessing in those days. Competition it is true was restricted, but there were many disadvantages, besides that of the frequent regulation of prices.

The unfortunate tradesman was not allowed to sell his goods in open market till after the buyers for the King and titled gentry had made their purchases; all goods of twenty-five pounds in weight and upwards had to be weighed by the King's Beam; and he never knew when he would receive a visit from the representatives of the Grocers' Company, who claimed control over every one who kept a shop of spicery. A law of 1373 laid down that no one should sell groceries except by the Guildhall weight of fifteen ounces. A law of 1394 ordered that no trader should expose spices or drugs without their first having been cleaned by an official garbler. And so on. It goes without saying that the mediæval grocer's liberty was restricted in the matter of hours of business. For him as for others the curfew was the reminder that the city gates were being shut and that for the day all trade was over.

For the delinquent there was the public pillory, where the seller of bad food often had the satisfaction of being placed as an object of popular ridicule, whilst the confiscated goods were burnt under his nose. One such delinquent in 1395, who had sold

## THE GROCERY TRADE

for good “ poudre de ginger,” divers powders made of the roots of rape, radish and old setewale, putrified and unwholesome for human use, was ordered to be placed on the pillory during the hour from eleven to twelve for three days in succession, the said false powders to be burnt under the pillory. The effective nature of this punishment will be forcibly apparent to my readers.

The practice of such methods of trading is a reminder that the service of the public was by no means the only end and aim which the mediæval traders kept before them.

Organised as they were in guilds, their own gain and enrichment was their main object. The struggling workers of a mediæval time often looked upon the traders as their natural enemy, whilst the traders consciously or unconsciously adopted the maxim “ *caveat emptor* ”—let the buyer take care of himself! Who has not heard of the miller’s “ golden thumb,”—which, kept inside the measures he was filling with meal, took toll of every pottle and gallon? To the consumer, the dealers seemed all alike steeped in iniquity. Shopkeepers measured out their wares by “ horn or by aim of hand,” or any cup or vessel which suited them ; and kept their shops dark in order that the buyer might be the less able to detect the tricks they were playing on him. Indeed, so far was the spirit of hostility fostered by the traders’ practices towards the “ poor commons ” that the friendliest state of feeling between

## MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

them never went further than an armed truce. Thus it is that our annals are full of enactments designed to protect the "poor commons" from the rapacity of the man who had goods to sell which they needs must have and of which he had a monopoly. On the other hand, it is fair to say also, that the Companies quite early in their history began to protect the good name of the trade of which they were the official representatives, and over which the law gave them control, by exercising supervision both over the quality of the goods sold and the justice of the weights and measures used in the selling.

Of this there is ample record in our annals as appears in the pages of this book.

The grocers of those days in conjunction with other traders were subject to some disadvantages which were peculiarly harsh. For instance, in 1256 Henry III., in order to benefit his subjects at Westminster, instituted a "National Fair" of fifteen days, and commanded that during the Fair all the shops in the City should be closed, and that the shopkeepers should bring their wares to Westminster. The feeling of annoyance among the shopkeepers at this arbitrary enactment was not allayed by an incessant downpour of rain that made open-air shopkeeping anything but a picnic, and ruffled the temper and jeopardised the health of the stall-holders. A similar disadvantage sometimes befell the traders in other towns. At

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Exeter, no one was allowed, during fair time, to sell anything in the City except at the Lammas Fair, which lasted from the last day in July to the third day in August ; goods so sold became forfeit to the Lords of the City, and were liable to be seized, "if they lie within the reach of a man's arm."

It will be interesting at this stage to note the evolution of the early retail shops. The first "shops" for the retail sale of goods, outside the retailer's own dwelling, were boards on trestles in the street against the front of the house. As the importance of trade in the great cities and towns increased it is easy to see how the shop grew out of this primitive and inexpensive mode of showing the various wares for sale. The trade centres, with the increase of population, became more permanent, and the movable stalls gave way to sheds or booths outside the doors, the more effectively to store and protect the goods.

In time it came about that the front rooms of the houses, the earliest shops, were thrown open and converted into business establishments.

In some instances, however, no sooner had the primitive retail trader of those days abandoned his rude stall or shed for the front of his house, than a rival, but less flourishing trader, would immediately take up his stand in front with a stall of his own, thereby injuring the trade of the original occupant. In connection with this custom, one historian

## MEDIÆVAL GROCERIES

informs us that the old trader sometimes found a way out of this difficulty by engaging the newcomer as his assistant !

An Act was eventually passed in the reign of Elizabeth that no one should erect any stall before any house, under a penalty of 40s.

Of course, there were various kinds and degrees of business premises then as now. There were the men who rented a tiny shop, small masters with but a single journeyman or perhaps two, as well as the great prosperous merchants ; and this not only in London but in all the cities and towns. Shops of such insignificance that they were described as those of the artisans who let down the ledge from their windows to display the goods which they themselves had made, existed cheek-by-jowl with the stately establishments of richer merchants.

For many years the city merchant lived over his business establishment, the era of a town business, with a country residence, having not yet dawned. The City records inform us that John de Grantham, whose name appears on the roll of membership of the Grocers' Company in 1347, leased a shop in the parish of St. Anthony for seven years at an annual rental of eight marks or £5 6s. 8d., a rather insignificant sum when compared with City rentals to-day. Though it is difficult to fix an actual comparison, the value to-day would be at least twenty times the value of money in that remote period.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

The pepperers and grocers of the fourteeenth and fifteenth century principally inhabited Sopers' Lane, Bucklersbury, the Chepe, and the Ropery.

Sopers' Lane (now Queen Street, Cheapside), where most of the leading grocers of that period lived, was a street of fair-sized shops, and had derived its name in all probability from the fact of its being the mediæval centre of the soap-making industry.

All these things clearly indicate how far removed the grocer of the present day is from his predecessor, some of whose wares are alluded to in the following lines from Chaucer's "Romaunt of the Rose" (1340-1400) :

There was eke weking many a spice,  
As Clowe-gelofre and lycorice,  
Gyngeore, and greyn de Parys,  
Canelle, and setewale of prys.

Tea, coffee, and chocolate, packed goods, and canned goods of all kinds, were undreamt of by the men who, with so much credit to themselves and so much pride in their calling, laid the foundation of this historic trade.

## CHAPTER VI

### PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY

THE Company of Grocers of London grew and flourished, and, at the same time, jealously watched over the interest of their trade.

As illustrative of the supervision exercised by the Grocers' Company over the trade at this date, it may be noted that the Wardens upon election had to appear before the Court of Aldermen and there assent to the following oath :

“ye shall swear that ye shall wele and trewly ov'see the craft of (Company's name) whereof ye be chosen Wardens for the yeere and all the good reules and ordinance of the same craft that been approved here be the Court, and none other, ye shall kepe and doo to be kept. And all the defautes what ye fynde in the same craft ydon to the Chamberlayn of ye citee for the tyme being, ye shall vele and trewly presente, Sparyng no man for me, grevying noo p'sone for hate. Extorcion no wrong under colour of your office ye shall non doo neither to doo noo thing

## THE GROCERY TRADE

that sall be ayenst the state, peas and profite of our Sovereign Lord the King or to the City ye shall not consente but for the tyme that ye shall be in office in all things that shall be longyng into the same craft after the lawes and franchises of the saide citee well and lawfully ye shall have you ; so helpe you God and all syntes etc."

The City Council's precept sent to the master in 1378, instructing the Company to elect men to search in the City for strange merchants bringing foods connected with their calling into the city, resulted in the Company electing two of their members—March Ernels and John Coayn—and they were sworn to see that those Merchants not of the Fraternity should sell their merchandise within forty days of their arrival, and that no merchant-stranger should sell to, or buy from, another merchant stranger on pain of forfeiting his goods. Later the City Council granted the Company the power of search over all spicers whether members of the Company or not, the ordinances of June 1386, including the following :

" Every person who keeps a spice shop shall be under the Government of the said Masters for the time being as well those who are not upon the Livery as those who are, and in case any of them are found in default that the Masters shall report their names at our next common congregation."

## PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY

It was also ordained that every Liveryman belonging to the said mystery wanting to assay any weights, great or small, should bring them to the hotel of the wardens, for the time being, paying for each half-hundredweight a halfpenny, and for each small weight so assayed a farthing.

In October 1393, the Grocers' Company petitioned the Mayor and Council :

"That seeing the deceit practised by merchant strangers in bringing to the city and selling in an unclean state divers merchandise of grocers that is sold by weight—pepper, ginger, cinnamon, &c., no merchandise that ought to be garbled should in future be weighed or sold before it has been cleaned and garbled by a man appointed for that purpose by the said grocer."

The result was that the law of compulsory garbling was re-enacted, and in January of 1394 the Mayor and Aldermen appointed Mr. Thomas Halfmark as Official Garbler, and proclaimed that any one selling spices or other commodities subject to the law of garbling, without such goods having been first inspected and cleaned by the official garbler, forfeited the same.

The Garbellor, or Garbler of Spices, was an officer of great antiquity in the City of London. He was empowered to enter any shop or warehouse to view and search for drugs, &c. to garble, and cleanse them, *i.e.*, sift out the impurities with which they

## THE GROCERY TRADE

were mixed when landed. It was the duty of the garbler to put a certain mark on each bale of merchandise after it had been garbled, and to bring to the Council chamber all powder and dirt that he might find. To further safeguard the public the common weigher was charged not to weigh any bale unless it bore the mark of the official garbler.

Connected with the growth of the Company is the foundation of Grocers' Hall in 1427. For some years the "Fraternity" had held its meetings at the House of the Abbot of Bury, afterwards taking up its temporary residence in Bucklersbury at a place called the Cornet's Tower. It was here that the Company began to superintend the public weighing of merchandise, and the list of weights attached to this establishment is detailed in a note of the year 1398, in which it is stated that they were deposited "in the house of our Community of the Mystery of Grocers in Bucklersbury." In 1427 they bought of the Lord Fitzwalter a portion of the land in Old Jewry, and upon it built the first Grocers' Hall, 1427, on the site which is still occupied by its modern representative.

In 1428, Henry VI. granted the Company a Charter of Incorporation, thus putting it on a legally recognised footing, by the name of "Custodes et communitas Mysterii Groceriae London." It empowered them to acquire and hold lands within the City of London and the suburbs thereof to the

## PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY

value of twenty marks per year, towards the support, as well of the poor men of the community as of a chaplain to perform divine service. It cost the Grocers a fine to the King, however, of 50 pounds, for monarchs did not grant their favours lightly in those days.

The Grocers' Company, having received its charter of incorporation, began to grow in public importance, and we find the King in 1447 conferring upon the Company the privilege of being the official garblers of the United Kingdom, London only excepted, this privilege, so far as the City was concerned, being vested in the court of Aldermen. In the special ordinance dealing with this subject, it is pointed out that spices and other kinds of merchandise, such as almonds, grapes, dates, treacle, senna, oils, ointments, conserves and confections were "daily sold to the subjects not at all cleansed, garbled and searched, to the manifest deceit and hurt of our subjects."

The King therefore granted authority to the Wardens of the Company to

"Supervise, garble, search, examine and prove all sorts of spices, drugs and merchandise to the purpose and intent that none of our subjects may be deprived of benefit in buying any of the aforesaid spices, drugs and merchandise, nor by the buying of these kind to be in any wise hurt in their bodily health."

## THE GROCERY TRADE

The Wardens were authorised, on behalf of the Company, to receive fees for their work, and to seize any goods offered for sale that had not been previously garbled, which goods were to become forfeit to the King. An account of the said seizures was to be made annually to the Royal Exchequer ; and the Grocers' Company, "for their care and diligence" were to receive for the use of the said mystery one half of such forfeitures.

One can imagine the august representatives of the Grocers' Company, probably by themselves or in company with the wardens of other companies and their attendants, riding out of London once or twice a year to visit the divers "feyres, cytyes and townys" in order to carry out the right of search. What a flutter the local tradesmen of provincial cities would be in on learning of the arrival of these visitors in their midst, and how anxious they would be to gain their goodwill ! The Spicer would hasten to overhaul his goods ; the local apothecary—whose knowledge of drugs probably exceeded that of the "grocer" inspector—would doubtless do his best to impress his visitors with the excellent quality of the articles he offered for sale ; and woe betide the innocent traders when goods were not up to the high standard of excellence which the Wardens, mindful of their own share in the proceeds, would doubtless set up.

There is in existence a rare tract on the subject, published in 1591, which throws much light on

## PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY

this practice and the relation between the grocers of that period and the Company. It is addressed from Grocers' Hall to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and complains that the representation of "Sundrye of the retayling grocers of London to the chief officers, the guardians, and to the first men of that society (the grocers) against the fact of the bad garbling of spices, between them and the merchants," had "in lieu of reformation, taught many indignities, and wrought some indignation towards the complainants."

The authors of the pamphlet inform the reader that the bad garbling of spices had then existed some years; they also subjoin a detailed account of the art as it should be carried out. They add that the necessity of cleansing and purifying spices was debated in the reign of Henry VI. when the office of garbling was given to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London by that King; but with the understanding that as well the merchant owners of spices as the city grocers retailing the same, should be advised with, in making the proper regulations for conducting the art. Nutmegs, mace and cinnamon, ginger, galls, rice and currants, cloves, grains, wormseed, aniseed, cummin seed, dates, senna and other things are spoken of as having been in that reign garbleable.

The privilege of garbling granted by Henry was afterwards confirmed with a few alterations, in the grants of Charles I., Charles II., James II.,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

and William and Mary. The last mention of the office of garbling occurs in July 1689, when a Mr. Stuart, the city garbler, purchased the company's right in the garbling of spices and other garbleable merchandise for £50 and an annual payment of 20*s.*

The management of the King's Beam was also entrusted to the grocers, this duty being not merely an honour, but also a source of profit. The Beam itself—that is to say, a steel-yard with weights—was, in the towns, kept by the mayor, together with a standard yard and a standard bushel. These were handed over to his successor on change of office, and thereupon the mayor by his deputies would make inquisition amongst the tradesmen—spicers and grocers included—to compare their weights and measures with the standards.

Already as I have noted, in 1318 the hundred-weight of 112 lbs., and the pound of 15 ounces had been agreed upon between the mayor and the heads of the pepperers, as they were then called.

According to Strype, one John Churchman, who was an alderman in 1393 and a member of the Grocers' Company, obtained from the King the privilege of keeping the beam and weights in the house he had built on the quay in the parish of All Hallows, Barking, for which the King agreed to pay John Churchman 40*s.* at each Easter and Michaelmas. It was not long, however, before he transferred this right to the Grocers' Company.

## PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY

He removed the beam from the custom-house, as it came to be called, at Barking to Bucklersbury. In 1398, a note on the company's books, which enumerates the weights attached to this establishment, states them to have been deposited in the house of the community of the mystery of Grocers in Bucklersbury.

Articles of all kinds were brought here to be weighed, and from a tariff of charges at the company's weigh-house in 1453, it would appear that these included drugs, alum, pepper, saffron, rice, cloves, mace, cinnamon, dates, ginger, currants, cotton, almonds, wax, saltpetre, and various precious woods. The fees charged varied from one penny to twenty pence according to the nature and weight of the package. In the following century King Henry VIII. granted to the City of London the management of the beam and the Grocers' Company was authorised to appoint a master and under-porter for the same, a privilege retained with more or less interruption till 1897.

In 1463 the ordinances of the company, which up to that period had appeared in Norman French were revised and translated into English. They provided among other things for the regulation of disputes between members, and stipulated that only by leave of the Master might the members go to law on any subject.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

IF I were to enter upon a chronicle of all the great and noteworthy citizens who adorned the grocery trade during this period, the task would bid fair to be unending. To the credit of the trade be it said, every period of its history has produced men who have not only proved themselves to be endowed with the highest powers of intellect; but shining examples of benevolent and charitable deeds prove likewise that they were men full of a sincere love for their country, their fellow citizens and their brother tradesmen. Whether we turn to the voluminous annals of the City of London or to the scantier records of provincial towns and cities, we are struck with the fact that grocers have played their part bravely in the history of our country; and that as often as not, due recognition has been made of their merits by King or by Commonalty.

Thus from the year 1231 to 1500 the illustrious roll of Lord Mayors of the City of London included the names of thirty-nine grocers who filled the

## SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

chief magistracy, many of them serving more than once in that exalted office. Foremost among these was Andrew Bokerel, Pepperer, who during the years 1231 to 1236 and a part of 1237 was Mayor of London (the title of "Lord" was then not yet added to the designation of the City's chief). He was of Italian extraction, his name having been anglicised in England.

Bucklersbury, which we have seen was anciently a street inhabited by grocers, was named after him. It is curious to note, in view of the fact that by hereditary right the Lord Mayors still officiate as butlers at the coronation of the Sovereign, that Andreas Bocherelli appeared in that capacity at the coronation of Queen Eleanor. He died during his mayoralty in 1237.

Passing over various citizens and pepperers who sat in the mayoral chair, including John de Grantham, we next note the name of Andrew Aubrey (1339-1340) who is stated to have held the confidence of his Sovereign and the esteem of his fellow citizens to an extraordinary degree, and to whom, as has already been mentioned, the king, when he went abroad, committed unusual powers for the preservation of good order in the City.

We have also seen that Nicolas Brembre, who was most active not only in municipal but also in national affairs in the troublous reign of Richard II., received the honour of knighthood from the hands of that monarch at the same time as another City

## THE GROCERY TRADE

worthy, Sir William Walworth. Reference should also be made to Sir Thos. Knolles, a merchant grocer of the period and one whose name is pre-eminently connected with the Guildhall, the re-building of this edifice having commenced during his second year of official life as Lord Mayor in 1410. His financial position may be judged from the fact that he frequently advanced loans to meet the king's necessities and is otherwise described as a great public benefactor. He gave the Grocers' Company his house for the relief of the poor for ever. He also caused "sweet water to be conveyed to the gate of Newgate and Ludgate for relief of the prisoners there," as the old chronicler informs us; prisoners in those days being locked up in the strong gate-houses with which the walls of the City, as in the case of other places, were guarded. It is noteworthy that from this grocer, mayor, and alderman of Dowgate Ward descended the Earls of Banbury.

A notable worthy, too, was Robert Chicheley, born in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and brother of Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury. His father lived at Higham Ferrars in Northamptonshire and was reputed to be of humble origin. It is on record that one of the courtiers of Henry VI. sent a messenger to his brother, the Archbishop, with a present of a rag pie as a scornful reminder of his birth. The prelate, having received the messenger, desired him to

## SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

return his thanks to his Majesty for reminding him of a worthy and affectionate parent, and to inform him that he should constantly pray that the King might out-distance his father in prowess and virtue as he had done his in honour and preferments. Robert Chicheley became a grocer, and lived in the parish of St. James, Garlick Hythe, in London. Baron Heath records that:—"by his great application to business and industry he became possessed of great wealth, and by means of his fair character attained great importance among his fellow citizens."

His London home was in the Vintry but he also resided at Romford. He became Lord Mayor in 1411, and was again elected in 1421. Like many of his predecessors, he was esteemed for his many generous actions. He gave to the parish of St. Stephen, Walbrook, a large flat ground whereon to build their church and, on laying the foundation-stone, the following year, gave one hundred pounds towards the expense of building. His will also made generous charitable provision for the poor, providing as it did that two thousand four hundred poor householders in the City should have "a competent dinner" on his birthday and 2*d.* each. He was a great benefactor to the parish of St. James, Garlick Hythe, to the hospital of Higham Ferrars, to the chapel of Hornchurch, Romford, and to the poor of his blood in the parishes of Higham Ferrars and Suldrop. He was

## THE GROCERY TRADE

an ancestor of Viscount Strangford. A member of the Grocers' Company, he received the honour of knighthood during his term of office as Mayor in 1421. Like his brother he took part in public life, occupied the position of Master of the Grocers Company on three occasions (1385, 1396 and 1406) represented the City in Parliament (1398) and served as sheriff in 1409-10. His brother William Chicheley was also a grocer in London and made sufficient money to purchase the manor of Woolwich, dying a rich landowner.

In 1418, the Mayor was Sir William Sevenoke, who was so-called from having been a foundling of Sevenoaks, Kent. He was apprenticed in London and afterwards rose to prosperity. Out of gratitude towards those who had helped him he founded in Sevenoaks a free Grammar School and almshouses for twenty people. In Johnson's "Nine Worthies of London," he is referred to as one who :

To please the honest care my master tooke  
I did refuse no toyle nor drudging payne,  
My hands no labour ever yet forsooke  
Whereby I might increase my Master's gayne.  
Thus Sevenoke lived, for so they calde my name,  
Till Heaven did place me in a better frame.

After his apprenticeship had expired, he joined the army, and fought for king and country in the wars with France, returning to England again after the battles had been fought and won.

## SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

For when my soldier's fame was laid aside,  
To be a grocer once again I fram'de ;  
And He which rules above my steps did guide  
That through his wealth, Sevenoke in time was fam'de  
To be Lord Maior of London by degree  
Where justice made me sway with equitie.

There is a curious point of contact between this honourable member of the trade and the times in which we live. It was under his chieftainship, in 1419, that a regulation was made prohibiting the sergeants and other officers of the Mayor, Sheriffs or City from begging for Christmas gifts. If the regulation is still in force, the City may be said to have done in the case of its own servants, what Parliament has done some five hundred years later for the whole nation ! Sir William Sevenoke was buried in St. Martin's Church, Ludgate.

The next notable grocer mayor in this period was Sir Stephen Browne, a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Fuller in his "Worthies of England" devoted the following interesting note to this particular worthy :—

"Stephen Brown, Grocer, son of John Brown, was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in this county (*i.e.*, Northumberland), afterwards knighted, and made Lord Mayor of London in 1438, in which year happened a great and general famine caused by much unseasonable weather, but more by some Huckstering Husbandmen who properly

## THE GROCERY TRADE

may be termed knaves in grain insomuch that wheat was sold for *three* shillings a bushel (intolerable according to the standard of those times), and poor people were forced to make bread of fern roots. But this Sir Stephen Browne sent certain ships to Danz, whose seasonable return with *rye* suddenly sunk grain to reasonable rates, whereby many a languishing life was preserved. He was one of the first Merchants who, in want of corn, shewed the Londoners the way to the barndoar, I mean the Spruse land, prompted by *charity* (not *covetousness*) to this his adventure. It may be said that, since his death, he hath often relieved the City on the like occasion, because as Symmachus well observed, *Auctor est bonorum sequentium, qui bonum relinquit exemplum.*"\*

Later, as I shall show, the City Companies, and among them that of the Grocers, made continuous provision of corn against famine and scarcity. To Sir Stephen Browne, doubtless, by the above recorded action, is due the honour of having shown them the way. He was M.P. for the City in his time, and, according to Orridge, an ancestor of Viscount Montague.

It will have been observed that in many cases the grocer who rose to eminence and fame in the

\* He who leaves a good example is the author of the good deeds it prompts.

## SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

City of London sprang from the country ; sent up to London probably as a youth to be apprenticed to one of the leading tradesmen and citizens, and thus graduating through a seven years' apprenticeship in the greatest school of commerce the world has ever seen. This is true of the next citizen and grocer I have to notice in this period.

In 1456 Sir Thomas Canning, who bears a name great in the history of England, ascended the Mayoral chair. Canning sprang from a prominent Bristol family, his father having been mayor of that important city and seaport and also representing its citizens in parliament. The son was sent to London on his father's death when only ten years of age, entered the grocery trade, and became Master of the Grocers' Company in 1456. Alderman of the ward of Aldgate in 1446 and in 1450 made sheriff, he took an active part in suppressing the rebellion of Jack Cade, and petitioned Henry VI. for remuneration for the expense he incurred in "drawing Cade's body upon a hurdle through the streets." It is said that in 1461, Canning and the Corporation quarrelled, for in that year he was "fined forty pounds and dismissed from office on account of contumacy and disobedience to the Mayor and Aldermen." It is worthy of note that William Canning, brother of Sir Thomas, was also a merchant of eminence in Bristol, and was mayor of the city in the same year that his brother was mayor of the City of London, so that the then first

## THE GROCERY TRADE

and second cities in the kingdom were simultaneously ruled by two brothers—probably a unique circumstance. Sir Thomas Canning is among the ancestors of George Canning, Earl Canning, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and Baron Garvagh.

Between this date and the year 1500, the annals tell us of several grocer mayors who were knighted on the field, having taken sides in the factions which were finally fused in the person of Henry VII. (1485-1509). These included Sir Richard Lee, a native of Worcester, Sir John Young (M.P. for the City), like Canning, a native of Bristol; and Sir William Taylor, from Ecclestone, Staffordshire. The latter received the honour of knighthood after the battle of Tewkesbury (1470). He is also credited with having left lands and tenements to relieve the inhabitants of his ward from paying the tax called fifteenths.

Sir Thomas Hill, a native of Helston, Kent, was Mayor in 1484. He directed in his will that the water conduit in Gracechurch Street should be built, and he provided for the cost of conveying thereto the water to fill it. He had the honour to meet in state the victorious Henry after the battle of Bosworth Field, and, accompanied by the Aldermen and citizens, to conduct him to St. Paul's, there to make his thanksgiving for the fortune that had befallen him. Sir Thomas Hill was buried in Mercers' Chapel.

The foregoing are among the more notable

## SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

grocers who attained to the highest dignity the city has to offer. Hardly less worthy of notice is Sir John Crosby, grocer, alderman, Royal Commissioner, Warden of the Grocers' Company, and M.P. for the city. In 1470 he served the office of Sheriff, and a little later he was appointed to the post of Mayor of the Staple at Calais—(then, of course, an English possession). He was knighted on the field by Edward IV. in the former year, along with several others who had joined with him in resisting an attack by the bastard Falconbridge on the City of London. The next year he was one of the Commissioners appointed to settle the difference with the Duke of Burgundy.

Perhaps the name of Sir John Crosby is best known in our own day from his having been the builder of that edifice over which so much, alas, fruitless controversy was lately spent, to wit, Crosby Hall. It was estimated in the owner's time a very beautiful building, being described as a residence fit for a prince. It was the highest building in London. For some time it was inhabited by the Duke of Gloucester, who afterwards became Richard III. Sir John Crosby was one of the most liberal of grocers, leaving many handsome bequests at his death to various city churches, the Grocers' Company, to the repair of Rochester Bridge, and to London prisons. The following inscription to him in raised letters appears on a stone at Theydon in Essex :

## THE GROCERY TRADE

“Pray for the Soules of Sir John Crosbie, Kynght, late Alderman and Grocere of London, and alsoe, of Dame Ann, and Annys, his wives, of whose godys was gevyn. . . . li toward the makyng of thys Stepyll, ao Vo. . . . que d’ni, 1520.”

London was not alone in producing public-spirited men from the ranks of the grocery trade. In other cities, such as York and Norwich, we find in the records a continuous succession of these traders as Lord Mayors and Sheriffs, the mayoralty being frequently the prize and the burden attained by the grocer anxious to serve his day and generation. As Lord Mayors of York we find the following grocers prominent in the annals of the city : Robert Hancock (1488), Robert Johnson (1496), and George Essex (1509).

Thus, until the end of the mediæval period, whilst England was becoming a great commercial country, a nation of shopkeepers, a land of great and fair cities, the grocer had his full share in the life of the time, whether as merchant, or as a sharer in the municipal honours and dignities. He was incorporated in his Society ; he regulated trade and the purity and quality of goods sold ; he fixed prices ; he ordained that a severe apprenticeship of seven long years should be the mode of entrance into the trade ; and he had a good conceit of himself and a high estimation of the part in life

## SOME PUISSANT GROCERS

he was called on to play. Moreover, he was jealous for the well-being and privileges of the trade; he watched over its honour and integrity, and suffered no one by knavery or chicanery to bring it into contempt. And in his way, he was also deeply religious, putting his trade under the protection of a patron saint—St. Anthony—as the manner then was, celebrating his feast-day, not only with cheer in plenty, but with pious observance; maintaining his Chaplain,—and, above all, providing for the necessities of the needy and unfortunate brethren and reverently following their bodies to the tomb when their labours were ended.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

IN the foregoing chapters we have endeavoured to gather, from the mass of general information which exists, although not all of it yet accessible to any but the student — such indications of the life and work, and condition of the grocers as are scattered up and down the pages of the records. Our work has brought us to the close of the mediæval period. Now, before entering upon the task of tracing the trade through later times, a chapter must be devoted to summing up and illustrating the results attained.

One most salient feature which cannot be too greatly emphasised as characterising trade in the mediæval period, is that it was a time of thorough-going “protection,” of monopolies and close preserves. Not only in London but in the provincial towns and cities such as Bristol, Norwich, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Canterbury and Nottingham, the traders in general, and the grocers in particular, were obliged to belong to the “Company” or guild which presented either a group of more or

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

less closely allied trades, or the one trade by itself. We have already had ample evidence on this point as regards London, with its Grocers' Company; and similar evidence can easily be produced with respect to the other places.

In this connection, it is also interesting to note the powers and privileges of the master grocers, with regard to those of the journeymen or assistants, who, starting life as apprentices, afterwards, before becoming master-men themselves, worked for a wage in the warehouses and shops. Little information is forthcoming on this subject, but it is evident that the companies, including, of course, the "Grocers," had full power over everything concerning their craft, and resented any attempt on the part of the journeymen to form societies for their own protection. But, although the journeymen were bound by oath not to form any confederation among themselves, many attempts were made to form societies for mutual protection, a lesson in combination being thus taken from the employers. Such was the attempt of the saddlers' men to form a religious fraternity in 1383.

According to the masters, however, this was but "a certain feigned colour of sanctity" under which the men merely wasted their masters' time and conspired "to raise wages greatly in excess"; and in fact in the space of thirteen years they had increased them to twice or three times the old customary rate. These proceedings were subse-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

quently put down with a high hand by agreement between the mayor and aldermen and the masters, and the meetings were forbidden for the future, and it was likewise ordered that the serving-men should be under the masters, and that the "masters must treat and govern" as in all other trades. Similar attempts also took place in other towns and amongst other classes of workers, but always the fear of the municipal authorities hung over the heads of the journeymen whenever they were tempted to agitate on their own behalf. They were bound by the rules of their craft, and these rules, when once entered on the city records, became an admitted part of the city statutes, to be enforced by the authority of the whole community. The masters found their jurisdiction recognised and enforced, and might call on the mayor "if the men are rebels or contrarious and will not work," to deal with them "according to law or reason." Many journeymen left the city to open business in districts to which its supervision did not extend, but the laws of other towns and cities made it extremely difficult for any other than freemen to gain a livelihood as retail traders.

I have already pointed out that the only way to enter the trade in those days was by way of apprenticeship. It was an age that believed in the gospel of efficiency, and it said, in effect, to the would-be grocer or draper or butcher, "if you are sufficiently ambitious to desire to own a shop you

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

must be prepared to sacrifice a definite number of years in order to equip yourself worthily for that position." The aspiring London grocer had first to pass through a seven years' apprenticeship, and at the end of that period, if he wished to open a retail shop, it was obligatory upon him to become a member of the Grocers' Company. He had to find six reputable men of the Company to recommend him for the freedom and certify his "condition and trustworthiness," and on admission he paid £2.

An apprentice then was practically a member of the family of the grocer to whom he was bound, and who undertook to instruct him in his trade and to supervise his moral conduct. The apprentices fetched the water in the morning—the apprentices of mercers alone being exempt from this domestic duty. They attended their masters at meals, and, when the day's business was over, they would accompany their masters at night with a lanthorn and the ever characteristic club or cudgel. Stow, in his old age, complained that all good manners were changed, and that though 'prentices still carried their clubs, they used them to break each other's pates and they could dress as they pleased.

The premium usually paid with the apprentices was £10; it had later, in the reign of James I., risen to £100, while no less a sum than £200 was paid in the last century by a member of the firm of Messrs. Petty, Wood and Co.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

That the apprentices of mediæval days had access to large sums of money and were not always too conscientious in the handling of the same, appears from the report in 1341 of the arrest of a grocer's apprentice by Geoffrey Adryan, spicer of Sopers' Lane, who found the sum of £40 in his pockets which he had appropriated from the business. Summary punishment was meted out to offenders in those days. This apprentice was forthwith charged with theft, and after due trial was hanged.

Many an interesting chapter could be written relating to the apprentices and their doings. As a body of young men they were ready to assert their rights, and woe betide the unlucky individual, or class of individuals, who aroused their anger. The days upon which they gained their freedom were given up to merriment, and to prevent lawlessness the government of the city found it necessary to compel the heads of business houses in every street to keep on foot, at the head of the streets, a certain number of men armed with spears.

It appears from a perusal of the Canterbury records that quite a number of grocers aspired to open business in that ancient town during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thus in 1399, William Chilton, spicer, was admitted as an "Intrant" and paid an annual fee. In 1398, we find the word "grocer" appearing on the records as representative of the calling of Robert Coupre,

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

who applied for admission, while, during the fifteenth century, we find Robert Cook, Robert Skapps, John Fyssh, Nicholas Curtseys, John Carlyll, and Christopher Lyon all appearing as grocers who sought admission to the city.

The prohibition on the part of local authorities and companies continued for some centuries, and as the records show, many a local grocer had to pay profit to the merchant guild or trade company ere he could continue his calling.

Many quaint incidents come down to us as illustrating the custom of the trade in those days. That the credit grocer was not unknown even then we have one or two instances to show. Thus at Nottingham in 1432, Matilda Dyvett, widow of John Dyvett, a spicer of that town, brought an action against one John Melton for goods supplied to the total value of 17*s.* These included 2 lbs. of pepper 2*s.*;  $\frac{1}{4}$  of saffron 3*s.*; 1 lb. ginger 2*s.*; 1 lb. cloves 1*s.* 6*d.*;  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. mace 1*s.*; 1 lb. sanders 6*d.*;  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. cinnamon 9*d.*; 12 lbs. wax 5*s.* 6*d.*; and 3 lbs. whole salt 9*d.* Did this action reveal a base attempt to cheat the widow out of a debt justly due to the estate of her deceased husband? It would appear so; but it is satisfactory to relate that after Matilda had proved the debt and complained that the shifty Melton had often been asked to pay and refused, judgment was given in her favour. Another Nottingham grocer who gave credit unwisely was John Ewer, who sued

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Reginald Shaw for goods valued at 13*s.* 4*d.*, consisting of spices and such-like articles. The same John Ewer, by his attorney, also sued another debtor, who, from his cloth, ought to have known better than to be in the position of defendant, to wit Master Hugh Martell, parson of the Church of Torlaton. The reverend gentleman had indulged in spices to the tune of 19*s.* 8*d.*, and should have saved trouble by paying for them. Here is the list:

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Draget Powder . . .	12 <i>d.</i>
1 „ Pepper . . . .	2/8
1 „ Ginger . . . .	2/4
$\frac{1}{2}$ „ Draget Powder . . .	8 <i>d.</i>
1 „ Pepper . . . .	2/-
1 oz. Saffron . . . .	14 <i>d.</i>
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. H Draget . . . .	9 <i>d.</i>
A salted Salmon . . . .	2/4
1 lb. Raisin Currants . . .	6 <i>d.</i>
$\frac{1}{4}$ „ Cloves and Mace . . .	12 <i>d.</i>
$\frac{1}{2}$ „ Frankincense . . . .	8 <i>d.</i>

The parson, who probably prided himself on his knowledge of the law, raised a quibble "that the declaration was insufficient and uncertain" as the dates upon which the spices, etc., were purchased did not appear thereon. We are not told how the action went, but its interest for us is that it reveals what the grocer of the fourteenth century dealt in, and the prices he made (of course

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

in terms of the existing money-value); and also that he gave credit and had sometimes the same difficulty as his modern descendant in getting his money.

Matters of contention between members of the same trade were bound to be settled without recourse to law. The settling of disputes was one of the functions of the company, provided for in its rules and ordinances to which the member had bound himself to submit. Thus the ordinance of the Grocers' Company laid it down that by the common consent of the fraternity no member should take his neighbour's house if he were of the same fraternity, or enhance the rent against the will of the neighbour aforesaid, under pain of forfeiting £10 as a fine to the company and to the offended brother, to each £5.

In 1456 a case occurred illustrating this rule in operation, when Richard Haale and Thomes Hooes were haled before the wardens of the Grocers' Company and examined for the offence of enhancing the rent and trying to put Edmund Tervyle out of his house. The offending brethren had the grace to confess their fault "don contrayre the good old ordenance wretyn" and were duly fined according to its tenor.

The wardens had also power to fine members of the trade for offences which would come under the modern Food and Drugs Acts. We read of John Ayshfeld who was thus mulcted, for offences done in making of untrue powder ginger, cinnamon and

## THE GROCERY TRADE

saunders, to the tune of 6s. 8d. He was duly warned that in case he should be found in such another trespass then he might expect a similar punishment.

Thus it is plain that the tradesmen received authority to rule the affairs of their own particular occupation, and that to them was committed the honour of the trade and its “good name and fame.” The channel by which these powers were received was either direct from the fountain head of all authority, the King, by an instrument known as a charter; or in London, as we have seen, by delegation from the Lord Mayor. In any case, the ordinances were approved and confirmed by that high official sitting with his aldermen in council assembled. However, the individual sometimes elected to “kick against the pricks,” especially if he were of a choleric mood and turbulent spirit. One such instance occurred in 1415, when, on March 21, one Thomas Maynele, grocer, of Tower Yard, was summoned by an alderman and duly interrogated as to certain irregular and sinister doings and sayings, and as to divers damages, dissensions, disputes and losses, by the same Thomas caused within the ward aforesaid, for the purpose of reforming the same. The Alderman in question happened also to be a grocer, viz., the renowned Sir William Sevenoke, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1418, just three years later. The rash Meynelle, caring nothing for the doubtless

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

excellent advice of Sir William, despitefully and menacingly said to him that in all his actions it was his duty to conduct himself well and honestly, lest such an end should ensue upon his designs as befell Nicholas Brembre, a man lately of as high dignity in the city, and even higher than he was (Brembre was Lord Mayor, who was afterwards drawn and hanged). On appearing before the Mayor's Court, the rash grocer was fain humbly to ask pardon ; nevertheless the court sentenced him to a year and a day's imprisonment. However, the magnanimity of the good Sir William Sevenoke was here well displayed. He pleaded for Thomas Meynelle, saying that if he were imprisoned he could not look after his shop. As a result of this generosity, the accused had his punishment remitted, although he was compelled to find sureties in £200 to be of good behaviour for the future.

Sometimes, again, as occasionally happens now, the grocer was the victim of either open or cunning robbery. Thus we have the curious record of a burglary at a grocer's shop in 1406. One William Hegge was caught red-handed robbing the shop of Thomas Normanton's widow, which, considering the sex of the proprietress, was a peculiarly heinous crime. Thos. Normanton had been a citizen and grocer, of London, and dying had doubtless left his business to be carried on by his wife, possibly for the benefit of his young son. The design was imperilled by the wicked attempt of the burglar,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

who nearly got clear away with goods and chattels to the value of £46 sterling. Happily, he was caught, and doubtless he received but short shrift ; hanging being then and long afterwards—in fact until fifty or so years ago—the punishment for far less grievous offences.

On other occasions the grocer was the victim of fraud. In 1418, a worthy member of the trade was waited on at his shop in All Hallows paris, Bread Street, by a plausible rogue who wanted to purchase 12 lbs of pepper, valued at 17s. The would-be customer offered to do a barter by way of giving in exchange twelve silver spoons and a quantity of other silver and jewels which he produced in a packet. No doubt, the grocer's cupidity got the better of his caution, for he readily assented. Whilst he was preparing the parcel of pepper, the cheat substituted another packet, which was loaded with tin spoons, beans and stones. It was not until the thief had got clear away that the grocer found he had been cheated out of his pepper. Such shady tricks are by no means unknown in our own day.

How the tradesman, and the grocer in particular, was regarded from the social point of view, might well be a question in a study of this period. Of course, the great City merchant-grocer, who sat in the aldermanic seat and was so frequently also an occupant of the mayoral chair, who bore coat armour and received not infrequently the honour

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

of knighthood, had always a certain reverence paid him.

Sir Walter Besant has been at pains to investigate this in his chapter on "Trade and Gentility."\* He regards the City Companies of London as often having drawn their apprentices from the younger sons of the country gentry.

There was always an immigration into London going on, he points out, and the humbler kind could only get away from their villages by running away. He goes so far as to say that "it was not by men who had been humble village boys that great offices in London were filled, but by men of gentility and of connections." He draws the conclusion that the younger son of a gentle family, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century at least, regarded trade in the City as a desirable and honorable profession, that often very large premiums were paid with the apprentice which were quite out of the power of the "baser sort." Thus he comes to ask the question "does trade detract from honour?" and in reply he quotes several authorities, among whom is the learned Camden. Speaking of the De la Poles, Camden says:

"William de la Pole, a merchant and mayor of Hull, was made a Baron of the Exchequer. His son, Michael de la Pole, became Earl of Suffolk, Knight of the Garter and Lord Chan-

\* Mediæval London.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

cellor. His being a merchant did not detract from his honours, for who knows not that even our noblemen's sons have been merchants? Whence it follows that *mercatura non derogat nobilitati*—trade is no abatement to honour."

Hence it is somewhat curious that the relatives of Margery Patson should have so strenuously objected when she designed to bestow her fair hand on one Richard Calle of Framlingham in Norfolk, where the Paston estates were situated. We seem to infer that Richard Calle, although he held the office of bailiff and steward on the Paston property—an honourable post indisputably—yet also kept some form of a grocer's shop. We find John Paston, in a letter to his relative Sir John Paston, write of his "ungracious sister" as follows:

"to the intent that they shall pluck no comfort of me, I answered him, that an my father, who God asoyle, were alive, and had consented to the marriage, he should never have any good will to make my sister to *sell candles and mustard* in Framlingham."

The intervention of the Bishop of Norwich was sought to induce the spirited young lady to give up her lover all to no purpose. The worthy prelate suggested that there might be some flaw in the form by which she had betrothed herself to Richard Calle which would render it void, but she

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

rejoined that she had fully intended and did still intend to bind herself to the contract. It is with some satisfaction that we learn from the subsequent "Paston Letters" that Margery married Richard and that the match was a happy one, in spite of the "candles and mustard," although the Paston family took a long while to get over what they evidently considered their sister's *mésalliance*.

Society in those mediæval days was differently organised from what it is in ours, with a different religion, different ideas and different methods of realising them. But a great change was to be inaugurated, heralded by the invention of printing and of gunpowder, and the discovery of new worlds beyond the seas. And one thing which marked this was the great increase in the number of those who wrote on all conceivable objects, and whose efforts, thanks to the printing press, have been rendered accessible to us. In the stirring times which marked the disappearance of mediævalism and the growth of modern conditions, there was occasion for the setting down in black and white of voluminous records of all kinds and these incidentally enable us to penetrate the mists of time, and gain a clearer view of what the grocer of the period was, what he did, and how he lived his life.

## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

WITH the opening of the sixteenth century a new era in the history of our country dawns. The century which saw the revival of learning, the Reformation, and the beginning of modern England was ushered in with eager activity with the young King, Henry VIII.

The world was on the eve of great discoveries ; indeed they were already struggling to their birth and upon no class of the community were they to have more far-reaching effects than upon the tradesmen, and especially the grocer. The great seaports of the time were soon to witness the arrival of argosies laden with the golden spoil of east and west, in far greater plenty than ever before, Bristol in England, Antwerp on the Continent, being, perhaps, the two most important ports of arrival in the northern parts of Europe. Indeed Antwerp was the commercial capital of the world, to which the Venetians and others brought spices, and silks, and a thousand rare and beautiful things from the immemorial East. And as Antwerp

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

was comparatively easy of access from London; the grocers of that day, we learn, would resort thither as to a market from which their stocks could be replenished at first hand.

The intellectual activity of the time which was then bursting into glorious promise of flower, was paralleled by an equal commercial activity in which the grocer was to have his share.

The records of the period are still too scanty, from our point of view, to enable us to get a complete and intimate view of the life of the grocer in the earlier part of the century. But the main lines of the picture can be drawn with some approach to accuracy.

The London grocer would have his shop with its appurtenances such as I have already described ; and he, with his family, lived in the best rooms on the premises above the shop. His apprentices, who were regarded as part of the family, lived with him, sleeping in the garret beneath the high-pitched roof of the gable. They were subject to their master's almost absolute authority, in which he was supported by the law and by the customs of the trade. Over the shop-door would hang a signboard, representing the owner's trade as a grocer, the most popular device adopted by these traders being the sugar-loaf. In the street, the varied London street cries would resound in his ears, while in and out of his shop would pass and repass the customers of the day dressed

## THE GROCERY TRADE

in the gay and picturesque costumes of the period.

The tradesman worked early and late ; trafficked with the customers on the one hand and with the merchants on the other ; gave up much of his time in many cases to the civic life of the city and extended his borders until he was perhaps able to retire to Hackney or Clapham Common, and leave his business to his son or to the husband of his daughter. Occasionally he would indulge in a brief holiday, when he would take his wife and family, dressed in their Sunday clothes, to the then salubrious retreats of Edmonton or Hornsey.

In those times, means of communication were of the scantiest and most primitive description. The pack-horses were practically the only means by which bulky goods could be carried about the country ; for the era of made roads had not then dawned, and of course the railway was yet many generations ahead.

With interests confined to his own little circle, the country or provincial tradesman would know little of what was happening in the exterior great world : for the newspaper had not yet come into existence, and but few could read. There was no cheap post with letters pouring in every morning to be attended to. Until after the Commonwealth, at any rate, but little business could have been transacted by means of letter. Afterwards there came a great and rapid development in postal business which

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

has continually grown by leaps and bounds until it has reached the enormous total of which we are nowadays cognisant, and with which we are sometimes even too familiar.

In the reign of Queen Mary we have a personal record, in the shape of the diary of a grocer, which throws an illuminating side-light upon the social life and business habits of those days. For the honour of his trade one feels compelled to disown the diarist as a really representative grocer of the period. In fact, he was as much a professional money-lender as a grocer, judging by the extracts from his diary which have been preserved ; and as he lived in the same house as Thomas Lodge, the dramatist, a contemporary of Shakespeare, it is a not unlikely theory advanced by one writer, that he was the original of the Usurer who appears as a chief character in one of Lodge's plays.

This grocer was George Stoddart, who was first an apprentice and then a manager to the dramatist's father, Sir Thomas Lodge, grocer, of London, Alderman, and afterwards, in 1563, Lord Mayor of the City. Sir Thomas Lodge seems to have been a very easy-going grocer, who allowed his apprentice a long tether and who left his manager very much to his own devices. This was probably owing to the fact that the "grocer citizen" was drawn into giving the bulk of his time and his closest attention to civic affairs rather than to his business. Strype

## THE GROCERY TRADE

records of him that “he showed himself a magistrate of good courage” in a certain “passage which happened to him on his mayoralty.” It appears there was then troubling the tranquillity of the City a certain Edward Skeggs who for some misdemeanour lost the freedom, but on making due submission had managed to get the privilege restored. He had also obtained the appointment of purveyor to the Queen. Now it seems that Skeggs had still a grudge against the City and wanting to offer some affront to the civic dignity, on pretence of requiring certain provisions for the Queen’s table, seized twelve capons, part of a consignment of twenty-two destined for that of the Lord Mayor. He also added insult to injury by making use of language not fit for the magistrate of the City to receive. Lord Mayor Lodge, equal to the occasion, made the contumacious Skeggs restore six of the capons, and threatened him with “the biggest pair of bolts in Newgate.” Away goes Skeggs to the Earl of Arundel, Lord Steward, and makes his complaint against the City ; whereupon that officer of the court writes a very threatening letter to the Lord Mayor, “in such a style,” says Strype, “that I believe, seldom or never the like had been sent to so great and eminent a magistrate, and so immediate under the Crown.” It was in fact a sharp rap over the knuckles, with a threat that if any hindrance to one of His Majesty’s officers occurred again, con-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

dign punishment would follow. Lord Mayor Lodge having friends at Court in the person of Lord Robert Dudley and Secretary Cecil, wrote them a very dignified and sensible letter which revealed Skeggs in his true character as a man whose word was not to be relied on, especially when it was in conflict with that of the Lord Mayor. This appeal however proved unavailing and Lodge was finally compelled to resign his gown.

But to return to Stoddart who, as I have said, was for many years in the employ of Sir Thomas Lodge. He appears to have had a true miser's perception of his own interest and managed successfully to feather his own nest, at the expense sometimes of his master and sometimes of the people.

Stoddart's natural keenness caused him to be entrusted by his master with business journeys as far afield as Ireland, Flanders, and even Russia—journeys which, it need hardly be said, were vastly different in Queen Mary's days from what they are to-day. The writer (Hall) who has quoted his diary and to whom I am indebted for it, declares that Stoddart "must have begun life in a very humble way." But this is not very probable; for in those early days, as Sir Walter Besant has amply proved, apprenticeship to a London grocer was what many a good county family thought a suitable introduction to life for one of its cadets. Stoddart at any rate had some capital of his own,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

sufficient to allow of a part being invested at interest, and also to keep him in funds on these long journeys abroad ; and he made a verbal arrangement with Master Lodge that he should pay his own expenses, and charge them to his master, plus interest, at his convenience. The way he did it was to keep a careful account of every item of his outgoings, charge it all up at compound interest and a little extra sometimes for profits foregone, and present the bill in a lump at the end of seven years—apparently at the expiration of his indentures.

In his personal expenses Stoddart practised rigid economy. He paid—and duly recorded—petty sums for mending his slippers and “showne” (shoes), his “dobltyt” (doublet), “houes” (stockings) and gloves over and over again. He sometimes borrowed money, too ; one entry showing that he owed £16 and interest for four quarters to a member of his master’s house. But this was evidently because his own money was better employed. While his wages appear to have been £20—this at any rate is mentioned as his fixed income—he had money out at interest on his own account, and he was able to spend on an average about £70 a year and still keep piling up his capital. The extra expenditure may indeed have been a mere matter of calculation, the means whereby he entered into the company of the courtiers and others to whom he lent money on his own terms—

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

the “well-dressed roisterers on whom he preyed” is the unpleasant phrase used by Hall. Thus we find in his Diary such entries as “a payer of gloves parfoumynge 19s.”—a sum equal to several pounds, reckoning as money is valued to-day;—and again “Dressing my hatte with the lynings 1s.”; “Dressing my sworde,” “riding hose 6s.,” and so on. Thus attired as any young buck of the time, with his fowling-piece on his shoulder and his spaniel at his heels, the young ’prentice would repair to Staines, where he met, no doubt, kindred spirits in a higher sphere, such as dissipated courtiers from Windsor. Amongst these he plied a brisk trade in loans and commissions, the profits of which were neatly entered in his private ledger. He could thus afford to lose occasionally at dice with his customers, and we read such entries as “lost at divers tymes at the dyce-playing when I was in Staines 19s.,” or “for findinge of trevye when he was lost turning ought of Staines 2s.”

Sometimes he went over to Antwerp—then, as we have seen, a very important buying and distributing centre for the wholesale grocery trade. He recorded his expenses in this manner: “I came to Andwarpe the 18th day of June in the morninge, and my carfe began at the Inglys Hous the sayme day at neyt. For my charge coming from London to Andwarpe the 18 June £2 4s. 7d.” His losses at bowls and dice he treated as items of business expenditure—as perhaps they were; just as com-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

mercial travellers even in modern days have been known to reckon such business expenditure as the champagne lunch that has secured an order. He enters : “ Lost at boules sinse my comyinge to Andwarpe 3s. 2d., and at dyce at W. Robynsone’s 10s.” And so on.

Hall tells us that after recording all such items as these for nearly seven years Stoddart one day presented the bill to his master, who, he suggests, must have been “ alarmed not a little.” But a London Alderman was hardly likely to be greatly upset by a demand for £758, which was the total ; although he may well have been loth to pay an account made up as this was. The chief items were as follows, headed : “ A note what money Mr. Thomas Lodge, Alderman, doth owe me, George Stoddart :

“ £85, which I alouyd for the loss of syllver which my Mr. made allowans for in Kg. Edward’s day for the ockapyng thereof for six yeres, £172 6s. 3d. For £23 wch. I ought for to have for my going and beinge in Oirlande seven munts, promysed by Mr. Lodge after the rate of £40 a yere, wch. would have gained at lest £46 11s. 6d.

“ For the ockapyng of £443 6s. 8d. for 3 yeres and a hayffe, wch. woolde have gayned in ockapyng or other wyes putting forth at lest £670 14s. 3d.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

“For payng of £60 by exchange at 20s. 8d. at the interest alouyed the Quynes Ms. agent in Flanders, wch. Mr. Lodge ought to have pd. be that he had the other £60 at 21s. and no, interest pd. £3 5s. for a legosy wch. my Mr. Prat dyd gyve me by his wylle wch. I have not as yet recd., £3 6s. 8d.

“Item—my Mr. owes me for a wayger layde wth. hee upon a boye or a girle, the wych I have wone, so that he owythe me £1 10s. 3d.

“So the total dew unto me Geo. Stoddart wch. Mr. Lodge owyheth me is £1198 – £758.” (less £443 6s. 6d., and more £3 6s. 8d., and other items.)

The £443 6s. 6d. here deducted is the subject of another memorandum headed :

“A note what mone I have ever reseyvvd if thus sum wch. I demand of Mr. Thos. Lodge, alderman, at this present daye.”

This says :

“I have recd. of this sum here agaynst at divers and sundry tymes as aperes by there owne hondes £443 6s. 6d.

“Itm More the doo demande of me, wch. ye saye was pd. unto me, but I knowe yt not who lycke cas as dyd aperes by there owne byll wch. I tar in peces in presens of them all, and promysyd that I would paye yt when my Mr. dyd allowe me my mone wych he sayth he will doo

## THE GROCERY TRADE

wth. the helpe of God. Then of thys mone above sayde I have spent in my ordynary charges as was to be provyd, and as the arbitrers did perseyve and no well, in this his servys and trade nothinge thereof alouyd my of my sayde Mr. Lodge, but dyd promys me afor them, wch. was T. Stokmede, Fr. Robynson and H. Hamaike, to alowe me hereafter, for that he was nowe called to be an alderman and colde not then doo yt but hereafter and yf God dyd spare him lyf," etc.

Of this earlier payment also, more than half was on account of interest upon the principal account, which has been manipulated by the agent so entirely to his own advantage that £44 6s. 6d. had grown in three years to £170, and the remainder in like proportion.

When Stoddart began business on his own account he had in hand a capital of something like £5000 (at present-day values) and almost as much out at interest. In his grocer's shop he troubled little about cash terms; what he preferred was credit at high rates of profit. And it is very clear that he managed to evade the usury laws of the day by not a few clever transactions. There is an entry of £12 to "Marry Cotton, gentilwoman, of Hamsher" for two rings, the money to be paid either at her marriage or her death, whichever happened first; and there appears to have been

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

quite an aristocratic party (whose names he enters as witnesses of the transaction) present under the young grocer's roof on the occasion when the rings were passed over. Sometimes hard cash was advanced in the form of a wager. Thus:

“Fras Robynson to G. S. 200*s.* lent him in form following:—that F. R. myst give me £200 for the sayde £10, at my coming from Russer. wher one Inglys ship hath byne alredy and yf I marre before I go thether, then the sayd Fransis must repays me £20 agayne, and I must give his wyffe a payer of sleeves of velvett, but if I deye he must have it.

“Fr. Robynson owes me at my daye of marryage £20.

“Francis Bayer to G. S. 4*s.* 2*d.* and is so much he must gyve me yf I have not young Mrs. Lowson unto my wyffe, the aforesaide sum, an yf I doo marry her then he is to paye me nothing, and is for 2*s.* 1*d.* gyven me in money, and he is to pay me bubblell.”

In a transaction with one J. Fabyan, to whom he advanced £80, it was arranged that Fabyan should pay the lender double the sum if at any time he played “dice or tables.” Another excellent bargain Stoddart made with the same Mr. Fabyan was a loan of £400 on his bond to pay twenty per cent. for it during the lender's life; that is, he was to pay £80 a year in interest alone. As

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Stoddart lived at least ten years afterwards his debtor paid the whole sum twice over and still owed it to the grocer's executors ! On substantial security, and with the aid of the best legal advice of the day, Stoddart was constantly discounting bills at high interest. He sometimes made bad bargains, as when he writes thus accounting for a deficiency "in the waye of monee lente for corne for the City," through the Grocers' Company, to be received "when we can gyt yt." On the other hand he discounted bills repeatedly for hundreds of pounds at twenty-five per cent. interest, and in one case, where the loan he had advanced amounted to less than £600, he piled up the amount due to himself to £1030 and sold up the debtor. In an average year he puts down his liabilities at £1096 10s. 0d. and his assets at £2148 3s. 4d. besides the profits of his investments in real estate. He had a house in Buttelle Lane which he kept in good repair with the assistance of the "tyler," the "plomer," and other workmen; and here he was still living as a successful merchant on 'Change when last we hear of him in 1572.

In the reign of Elizabeth, as all along through the history of London, the youth from the country continually turned to the City whose streets had been fabled to be paved with gold, with hope of fortune and advancement. In the long roll of Lord Mayors, how many are credited with a country birth and origin ! Doubtless many of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

them, as these records show, belonged to powerful families with London connections and had every advantage with which to start and every influence to assist them.

Occasionally however, we find, as in the case of Sir William Sevenoke, that the poor and unknown lad rises to eminence and affluence among the grocers of the metropolis. This was the case in Elizabeth's reign with John Sadler, a native of Stratford-on-Avon, and one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, who came to London to look for a berth. We read that "he joined himself to a carrier and came to London, where he had never been before and sold his horse in Smithfield, and having no acquaintance to recommend him or assist him, he went from street to street and house to house asking if they wanted an apprentice; and though he met with many discouraging scorns and a thousand denials he went on till he lighted on one Mr. Brokesbank, a grocer in Bucklersbury."

Mr. Brokesbank was a Warden of the Grocers' Company and one of the City grocers who had protested against the granting of a monopoly in starch, and was evidently a keen business man. He granted Sadler an interview, but, "he long denied him for want of sureties for his fidelity and because the money he had (but ten pounds) was so disproportionate to what he used to receive with apprentices." After he had heard, however, the discreet account he gave of himself and "the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

motives which put him upon that course," he regarded him more favourably and upon receiving from him a promise to compensate with diligent and faithful service whatever else was short of his expectations he ventured to receive the lad upon trial. Sadler so well approved himself, during the period of probation, that Brokesbank accepted him into his service and bound him for eight years ; and we may safely conclude that the connection thus established was satisfactory to both.

Upon the termination of his apprenticeship, John Sadler entered into partnership with Mr. Richard Quiney, a fellow townsman from Stratford-on-Avon; and they carried on a successful business as grocers and druggists at the sign of the Red Lion in Bucklersbury. They counted among their friends no less a personage than the bard of Avon, William Shakespeare, and it is probable that the many references in Shakespeare's works to the goods handled by grocers were due to the poet's frequent visits to the emporium in Bucklersbury. It was here that he would probably often see unloaded the merchandise of Venice from those

Argosies with portley sail,  
(which) Like signors and rich burghers of the flood  
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
That courtsy to them, do them reverence,  
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE TUDORS

At this shop he would hear the customers “call for dates and quinces” (*Romeo and Juliet*), penny-worths of sugar (*Henry IV.*), raisins of the sun (*Winter’s Tale*), rice (*Winter’s Tale*), mustard seed (*Midsummer Night’s Dream*), nutmegs (*Winter’s Tale*), ginger (1 *Henry IV.*), mace (*Winter’s Tale*), peppercorns (1 *Henry IV.*), and currants (*Winter’s Tale*).

He would also probably have heard from the lips of his grocer friends the story of the Cheapside grocer referred to in a previous chapter who was executed by Edward IV. for innocently making a pun on his shop sign “The Crown” and which led Shakespeare to put into the mouth of Richard III. when he instructs Buckingham to follow the Lord Mayor to the Guildhall ;

Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen,  
Only for saying he would make his son  
Heir to the crown ; meaning, indeed, his house,  
Which by the sign thereof was termed so.

It may also be inferred that when the poet quotes Benvolio as saying to Romeo ;

In that crystal scales let there be weighed  
Your lady’s love against some other maid ;

or when he suggests in *Hamlet*, that

Thy madness shall be turned into weight  
Till our scale turns the beam ;

he was using illustrations gained through visits to

## THE GROCERY TRADE

his friends. Readers familiar with the *Merry Wives of Windsor* will also remember that Falstaff in making love to Mrs. Ford exclaims

“ Come, I cannot cog and say thou art this and that, like a many of those lisping hawthorn buds, that come like women in men’s apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple time.”

It is to be hoped, however, for the sake of the reputation of Sadler, that when Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Achilles,

Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,

he was thinking of some other and less respected trader. Sadler and Quiney were active supporters of St. Stephen’s Church, but on being appointed churchwarden of St. Stephen’s, John Sadler paid a fine of £20 in preference to accepting the offer and on another occasion the partners lent the parish £5. Although busily occupied with his business in London, John Sadler never forgot his native place and it is recorded that in 1632 he presented to the corporation of the town of Stratford-on-Avon two gilt maces to be borne before the bailiffs and chief aldermen. Both Sadler and Quiney were members of the Grocers’ Company, and each paid a fine of £50 in preference to serving as an officer.

## CHAPTER X

### TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

DURING the Marian and Elizabethan periods of our history, the various City companies, successors of the craft-gilds, fulfilling the purposes for which they were called into being, attained a great height of honour, wealth and influence. There came a time when their monopolies had to be broken, but in the period now before us they were still really representative of the life of their respective trades, and this meant influence and prosperity. We must not imagine, however, that they were quite uninfluenced by the general politics of the day. It was of course a time when religious changes of the period caused the Grocers' Company so to vary their beliefs as to accord with the national sentiment. Consequently we find the company strictly Protestant during the Reformation period, in Henry VIII.'s reign, whilst on the restoration of the Catholic religion by Queen Mary, the company appears to have reverted, at any rate temporarily, to the Catholic faith, and incidentally came into conflict with Bishop Bonner over the appointment of rector to St. Stephen's.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

From various entries in their books, quoted by Baron Heath, it appears that it was customary for the Company during Mary's reign to repair to St. Stephen's, Walbrook, to "hear dirge sung" or to attend mass. On the accession of Elizabeth the Protestant religion was at once re-adopted and the books record the attendance of members of the Company at St. Stephen's to hear divine service. In 1563 the Company came to the conclusion that they would have no further use for their relics of Catholicism and therefore ordered a sale of all the vestments, copes, albs and other ornaments "belonging to Church stiffe."

The Grocers' Company, in addition to looking after the interests of the trade, were also called upon to assist in the protection of the country. By command of the King, precepts were continually issued to the various City Companies, calling upon them to provide men or money for national interests.

In 1557 the Grocers were commanded to find sixty "good, sadd and hable soulders . . . as well for the suretie and safeguarde of their highnesses chamber and cittie of London as the resistance of such iniquitious attempts as may happen to be made against them by foreigne enemie." Five years later, a further thirty-five men were called for; in 1569 a further sixty, fully armed, are requested "to march against the rebels in the north"; in 1574 the Company was ordered to

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

provide fourteen firkins of gunpowder, each firkin to contain at least sixty pounds; in 1578 a demand is made for fifteen men for her Majesty's ships, and in 1588, on the occasion of the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada, the Company supplied on demand five hundred men. The Companies had the power to press men into this service, and it would appear that apprentices and journeymen were often called upon to leave the counter for the battlefield.

A sixteenth-century grocer probably found these civic precepts a convenient channel for disposing of any recalcitrant apprentices or undesirable assistants.

In view of the foregoing, it is not surprising to learn that the Grocers' Company deemed it expedient to establish an armoury and appoint an armourer, an entry in their books recording the payment of an annual grant of 13*s.* 4*d.*, and a payment of one shilling per day to one John Edwyn for his services as armourer.

The Elizabethan age is of special interest from our point of view on account of many trade developments, amongst them being an important step with regard to apprenticeship.

Under Elizabeth, stringent laws regulated labour of all kinds, and it was particularly provided that the door of apprenticeship should be used for entrance into all trades and crafts then practised.

From time to time in the preceding reigns, laws

## THE GROCERY TRADE

had been enacted regulating the form and manner of apprenticeship, but certainly the most important and comprehensive law bearing upon the mode of entering an occupation was the Statute of Apprentices passed in 1562, the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. By this statute, which marked a great advance on all previous legislation, it was declared that no person should set up, occupy, use, or exercise any craft, mystery, or occupation, then used or occupied within the realm of England and Wales, except he should have been brought up therein seven years at least as an apprentice.

London and Norwich were exempted from the operation of this Act, doubtless because the management of the different trades and occupations in those cities was already provided for by the Companies with their Charters to warrant them. By the same Act were established certain regulations governing employment in general, which are not without interest as bearing upon questions of to-day. For example, it was laid down that a testimonial must be given to the employé on his leaving, for which the said employé was to pay twopence; the servant was to forfeit a penny on being absent from work; apprentices were to be above ten and under eighteen, and in order that there might be employment for all those who desired it, a master could not take three apprentices unless he employed a journeyman also; and so on in proportion. Hours were long in those days

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

(although before the Reformation there were very frequent holidays), viz., from 5 A.M. until 7 or 8 P.M., out of which two and a half hours were to be allowed for meals and drinks! In summer the hours were much longer than in winter. The object of this "Statute of Apprentices" was further, to provide for the regulating of wages for every trade by the justice of each district (of course, in London this would be done by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen) and no one was allowed to pay more or less than the sum settled as the current rate of wages. Among many regulations as to apprenticeship, it was laid down that apprentices to merchants and shopkeepers should only be drawn from a well-to-do class. One result of this was, as it was intended to do, to check the emigration to the towns, while it also maintained the quality of the recruits that entered the grocery and other commercial callings. This Statute of Apprentices of "Good Queen Bess" was the first serious attempt to regulate and organise industry after the great breakdown of mediæval organisation which followed the Black Death.

During this period when the Tudors ruled the rising destinies of England, we find that the prices of groceries varied considerably. The Northumberland Household Book, relating to the expenses of the Earl of Northumberland during the reign of Henry VIII., gives some very interesting particulars of the prices of the period. At a time when a

## THE GROCERY TRADE

sheep could be bought for 1*s.* 5*d.*, pepper was 1*s.* 4*d.*, mace 8*s.*, cloves 8*s.*, and ginger 4*s.* per lb., while sugar cost 4½*d.*, currants 2*d.* and prunes 1½*d.* per lb. During the reign of Elizabeth prices went up. The debasement of the currency and the destruction of the monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII., coupled with the discovery of the silver mines of America by the Spaniards, led to a general rise in prices. Sugar bought for the household of Lord North in 1577 cost 1*s.* 3*d.* per lb., prunes 2*s.* per lb., currants 4½*d.*, and raisins 3*d.* per lb.

W. Harrison, an old historian also refers to equally high prices. Sugar "formerly sold at 4*d.* per pound," then (in the time of Elizabeth) he says, fetched half a crown.

"Raisins and Currents were sold for a penny that now are sold at sixpence and sometimes at 8*d.* and 10*d.* per lb. Nutmegs at twopence half-penny the ounce, ginger at a penny the ounce, prunes at a halfpenny farthing; great raisins, three pounds per penny, cinnamon at fourpence the ounce, cloves at twopence, and pepper at twelve or sixteen pence the pound."

Stow tells us that grey soap speckled with white sold at a penny and a penny farthing per pound and black soap for a halfpenny per pound. It may of course be borne in mind in comparing prices that a penny was worth in those days several times as much as it is now.

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

Sugar is one of the articles which came into prominence in this period. Many glimpses of the place which sugar had in the economy of the time may be gleaned from contemporary records. Sugar refining is said to have been introduced into England in the reign of King Henry VIII. there being at that period (1544) two refineries in the Metropolis. At this time, however, most of the refined sugar sold in England came from factories in Antwerp, but when Antwerp, the commercial capital of Western Europe, was sacked by the Spaniards, the English refiners had a monopoly of the trade for about twenty years and rapidly acquired fortunes.

In 1589, Lord Burleigh, as representing the Queen, wrote to the Grocers' Compay with reference to the bad quality and high prices of sugar supplied to the royal household. The wardens of the Company, one of whom was Mr. Brokesbank, called before them various retail grocers and asked them for an explanation. The retailers laid the blame upon the Barbary merchants, who appear to have possessed a monopoly for importing Barbary sugar, and charged them with bringing into the country coarser sugars with the better qualities, and compelling the buyers to purchase some of each. They also charged them with falsely marking the said sugars. The Grocers' Company thereupon wrote to Lord Burleigh and pointed out to him the disadvantage of the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

monopoly and suggesting that if it were thought desirable to continue the monopoly that they, the Barbary merchants, be held responsible for supplying Her Majesty's household with "good choice and the best sugars at reasonable rates and prices." There is evidence here of a pretty bitter feud between manufacturers and retailers.

Sugar again came under the ban of the royal displeasure in 1608, this time on account of the high price. The troubles in Barbary had diminished the supply from that quarter, and the Portuguese, who had the main trade in sugar at this time, were diverting it to other countries, on account of an alleged high import duty. For these reasons, refining works in the city were shut up for want of raw material, and the price was raised.

In regard to sugar we may incidentally note the practice of using that toothsome commodity for purposes similar to those for which "palm oil" is sometimes permitted to be used! Thus in the Newcastle records (for 1565) we find an entry that the corporation paid 21s. 11d. for "4 lofes of sugar" weighing  $18\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. at one shilling and two pence per pound for a present sent to the French "imbassyturs." In the Bath records under date 1587, there is an entry which shows that some of the choicest wares of the grocer were purchased as presents for the Sheriffs and Justices of the Shire, including 2 lbs. raisins at 14d. the lb.; sugar at 1s. 8d. the pound; a gallon of claret wine for 2s. 6d.; and a pot of sack for 20s. The "eloquence

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

of the sugar touch" referred to by Shakespeare was, in all probability, a reference to this custom.

During the reign of Elizabeth and later monarchs, the grocers suffered, in common with other traders, from the pernicious practice adopted by those Sovereigns of granting monopolies to favoured personages, whereby the manufacture or sale of certain articles was controlled by individuals.

Students of English history will remember that the monarchs of the Tudor and Stuart period were frequently in need of money and that they often adopted questionable means of raising the same from the pockets of their loving subjects. Thus Queen Elizabeth occasionally applied to the City of London for the loan of various sums. When she happened to owe her servants and dependents money for their services, she would discharge her indebtedness by granting them patents for monopolies. These they sold to others more directly interested, and great discontent was thereby caused, for, as Hume tells us, the monopolists were enabled to raise commodities to what price they pleased and put invincible restraints on all commerce, industry and emulation of the arts. The part which the Grocers' Company took in opposing the grants of such monopolies, both in this and the succeeding reign, is one of the most creditable episodes of the Company's history.

"It is astonishing," says Hume, "to consider the number and importance of these commodities, which were thus assigned to patentees." Currants,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

among the articles the grocer dealt in, were one of these. A licence was granted "to trade the Levant seas with currants only," the licensee paying the Crown £4000 per annum. Salad oil was another monopoly, the importation and sale being granted by the Queen to an Italian in 1575. The Court of the Grocers' Company took active steps by petition to the Mayor and Aldermen, to protest against this.

Starch was yet another article for which a monopoly was granted. Starch was a material doubtless then in great demand, if the size of the collars seen in portraits of the period of both men and women is any criterion of its use. For laundry purposes starch is said to have come into general use during the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth. Stow in his annals notices the coming to London in 1564 of a Flemish woman, Madam Dinghen van don Plasse, with her husband. She was the daughter of a man of good position and had removed to England for greater security; and soon after arriving she started in business as a starcher, acquiring a large custom among her own countrymen who had migrated to England. Her fame as a starcher, and the sight of the beautifully starched linen she produced, led to the more general use of cambric and lawn, and consequently of starch to stiffen them. The Fleming also took pupils whom she charged five guineas each for instruction, and a sovereign for initiating them into the art of

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

seething or boiling the starch. Stubbes termed the new product as “a certain kind of liquid matter . . . wherein the devil hath learned them to wash and die their ruffs.” In 1587 Richard Young, of London, was granted for £40 yearly, the privilege of making starch from the bran of wheat. The use of starch grew, until about the year 1594 or 1595 it was already sufficiently in demand to excite the cupidity of those who were looking around for an article which should be a suitable subject for the grant of a monopoly. In that year Sir John Parkington procured the Queen’s Letters Patent authorising him alone to make and vend starch. It was then becoming a commodity in great request, and was vended for the most part by the grocers, who in turn served the chapmen and smaller traders throughout England.

The grant of the patent was eminently injurious to the grocers. Accordingly, we hear of them, to the number of thirty-nine, making complaint to the Lord Treasurer, and speaking in this petition of the assigns of the patentee “minding to enrich themselves very extraordinarily by the execution of the said patent.” In order to make the most of it they had compelled the grocer to sell them such stocks of starch as they had in their shops and warehouses at the buyers’ own prices, which was much less than the starch had originally cost. If the grocer were recalcitrant, his starch was seized and taken away unpaid for. If the patentees or their agents

## THE GROCERY TRADE

met with active resistance, the petition goes on to say, the grocer was haled before commissioners and required to enter into bonds in great sums of money to buy all the starch he sold of the patentee or his assigns. The grocers were also required by the bond—and this shows the character of the fetters which the grant of monopolies had the effect of placing upon trade—not to sell starch to any but to such as were licensed to buy by the said patentee's assigns. The grocers did not object to the first part of the conditions ; as they said, out of their Company's regard to the loyalty due to Her Majesty. But as to the latter condition, they were persuaded that they could not yield without compassing their own overthrow and undoing. The monopoly was eventually revoked by Queen Elizabeth.

The next phase of the Starch question occurred in 1607-8 when a Company of Starchmakers was incorporated. This new departure did not commend itself to the Grocers' Company and we read that on February 5th the Company represented to the Lords of the Council, through the Lord Mayor, the evils likely to arise from such incorporation and they alleged among other things that the price of the article had been raised from 15s. to 30s. the cwt., that the grocers were compelled to buy from the new Company at such prices and rates as they shall limit and appoint, being threatened with dire penalties should they refuse. They accordingly

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

sought, as freemen of London, the privilege of enjoying their “liberty and custom of free buying and selling in their trade in such ample and lawful manner as is fitting and expedient.”

Whether as a result of the action of the Grocers or from some other cause, the incorporation was suspended in 1610, and all domestic manufacture of starch forbidden. This proved even more unsatisfactory, and a proposal was soon afoot to re-incorporate the Company; and eventually James I. granted letters patent to the Starchmakers’ Company on March 13th, 1622. The Company possessed a master, two wardens and twenty-four assistants, but did not establish a hall. It is plain, says Price, “that the patent for starch was issued and re-issued as a means of liquidating the debts of two courtiers whose financial circumstances were desperate.” The Queen joined in the general scramble of creditors to realise upon inadequate assets, intervening to prevent the performance of a contract which bears the indication of having been specially negotiated in order to make the contracting parties preferred creditors instead of the Queen. “The crown’s financial interest alone explains the extraordinary vigour with which the Council prosecuted offenders against this particular monopoly.” The ostensible object of the patents was to prevent the consumption of wheat in the manufacture of starch but evidence is not wanting that such starch as was made under the supervision

## THE GROCERY TRADE

of the Patentees was made with good wheaten flour, and those acquainted with the manufacture of this period recorded the possibility of employing bran alone as a popular delusion which was fostered by those who had no intention of foregoing the use of flour.

A petition was presented to Queen Elizabeth by Sir Thomas Mildmay in 1596 wherein he applied for a monopoly to refine sugar on the grounds that frauds were being practised by the refiners. The trade, which was severely handicapped by many other petitions at the time, was fortunately saved from the iniquity of a sugar monopoly.

Two years after the incorporation of the Starch-makers the ever-thrifty James had interested himself in a proposition to make soap "of the materials of this Kingdom only"—a very specious pretext for creating a monopoly. A Patent was granted in 1623 to two nominees of Sir John Bourchier, the arguments advanced by the patentees in favour of their monopoly being that English materials, *i.e.*, bean-straw, pea-straw, barilla and inland kelp would be used and the produce of the foreigner thus kept out.

The patentees were to stamp all the hard soap so made with the device of the Rose and Crown, "the better to distinguish their soap from all counterfeit soap;" and they were further enjoined that, as the public may be "prejudiced and damned" by the enhancing of the price, none of the soap so made by

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

them should be sold “at any higher or dearer rates and prices than hard soaps and soft soaps of the best sorts and kinds were most usually sold for, within the space of seven years now last past.”

The trade protested against this corner in soap, and pointed out that the new article was both unmerchantable and unserviceable, “but,” writes Sir Edward Conway to the Lord Mayor, “His Majesty thought the proposition of the Patentees reasonable,” and accordingly orders that the Court of Aldermen arrange for a trial wash. The soap was duly tested and the Aldermen under date of May 2nd, 1624, after acknowledging his Majesty’s Royal favour “in that it pleased him to command our service in a business of this nature wherein the City of London hath particular interest as being the Store House for all England of that commodity” repeated that :

“they were unable to determine whether it was made only of the materials of this Kingdom or not, but they found that with much labour, it would, if used by skilful washers, wash coarse linen as well as the ordinary sort of soap used in the Kingdom, but they were of opinion that it was far inferior to the best soft soap ordinarily made in goodness, sweetness and merchantableness, and they found that their servants and other washing women, whom they had caused to make trial of it, utterly disliked it.”

## THE GROCERY TRADE

It is not surprising to find that with the offer on the one hand of a diamond worth £35,000. and the probable return to the Revenue of £20,000, through a tax, and on the other hand this report, the King should have grasped the former.

Doubtless this was amongst the “projects” which contributed to the disgust of Parliament and led, in the same year, to its memorable declaration that all such monopolies were illegal, whilst the Lord Treasurer, Lord Middlesex, was impeached and condemned for bribery. However the matter fared in this reign, the soap-makers waxed strong and prosperous in the next, and forty years afterwards, in 1663, the Corporation agreed to recognise their Company. On this occasion, the following report was “openly read” :

“To the Right Hon. Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen. According to the late order of this honourable Court upon a petition of the Mayor, Warden, and Assistants of the Company of Soap-makers, London, we have perused and considered the Charter of the said Company and the Petitioners desire to have the same enrolled, and their Company to be received into the franchise of this City and are of opinion that their said Charter be enrolled by Mr. Town Clerk, and the said Company admitted and owned for a Company of this City with these only limitations that their present members also free of their

## TRADE UNDER THE TUDORS

Companies be not taken off from their said other Companies nor avoid any subjections to, or services in, the same Companies without the consent of the said other Companies or transmission according to the customs.

“ And likewise that the members apprentices of the Soap-makers free of their Company be made free of the said other Companies to which they were bound. But that for the future it may be free to bind their apprentices to become freemen of the Soap-makers so to reduce all of the trade in time succession to the said Company of Soap-makers for better regulation of their trade and Society. All which notwithstanding, we leave to the grave consideration of this honourable Court, 19 May 1663.

“ RICHARD CHIVERTON.

“ FRANCIS WARNER.

“ RICHARD BROWNE.”

The Report was ordered to be entered in the Records, and it was agreed that the Company should be “owned and accepted” as a Company of the City.

The Soapmakers never possessed a hall. In a published list of City Companies issued in 1827 they appear as No. 71 in order of precedence, but the Company has long since become extinct.

## CHAPTER XI

### TRADE GOVERNMENT

WE have seen in the previous chapter that Queen Elizabeth's reign was noteworthy, amongst other things, for the passing of the Statute of Apprentices. The grocery trade was affected by it, in common with other occupations and crafts, and the only way to become a grocer then was to serve a regular apprenticeship of seven long years. That was by no means the only way in which the trade was governed. The merchant or trader could by no means please himself as to the price of his goods. In those days the market was a much more important institution than nowadays, and in connection with market regulations much may be learned concerning the policy of state interference in regard to prices.

In 1534 a law was placed on the statute book giving power to regulate the prices of victuals by authority. This measure appears to have become obsolete in a comparatively short time, for by a proclamation of 1586 it was threatened to reinforce its provisions, on account of what is described as

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

the uncharitable covetousness of the great corn-masters, who apparently were holding stocks of corn in hope of a future rise, with the effect of pinching the poorer sort of customer. The Privy Council thus sought to protect the public against those who would have made capital out of their needs. The machinery by which such oversight of retail prices was made possible was constituted not only by the local justices but by officials who had an independent jurisdiction ; that is to say, the Clerks of the Market, whose power extended to the holding of courts for the regulation of weights and measures and the punishment of all market offences. It is clear from a proclamation of 1618 that the duties of these officials, whose jurisdiction extended to the grocers as well as to other traders, was somewhat akin to those performed by the present-day inspectors under the Food and Drugs Acts. The preamble of this document recites that although there should be a common standard of weights and measures throughout the whole realm, the fact was that there was immense diversity even to the extent that “many unconscionable persons have and do use several weights and measures, with the *greater to buy*, and with the *lesser to sell* ; and do also use false and deceitful beams and balances to the great loss &c. of our subjects.” It is therefore set out that the Clerk of the Market ought to punish and reform the said abuses and to

## THE GROCERY TRADE

"set reasonable and indifferent rates and prices upon victuals and other provisions, and see that victuals be wholesome and of good condition."

The proclamation then sets out what duties the said officers shall diligently perform and the account they shall render concerning the same. These include inquiry into all abuses of weights, balances, and measures, and all deceits and abuses of the various trades, including specifically those of the chandler and grocer. Further the Clerk of the Market ought to search out and inquire that all victuals and other things offered for sale, whether for the sustenance of man's body or for that of his horses and cattle, be wholesome and of good quality—and that they sell at and for reasonable and moderate gains and not at unreasonable and excessive prices. To search out and punish all forestallers, engrossers and regrators, "who by their inordinate desire to gain do enhance the price of all things vendible" was also part of the Clerk's duty. Trial by a jury of twelve men is provided for in the court of this official, and it is directed that he receive constant assistance from the justices in the counties and from the constable of every parish. In the towns some difficulty was apprehended in the carrying out of these provisions for the protection of the buyer—who, in the mass, was of course much more in need of this kind of legislation than the people of to-day, through the

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

great ignorance then prevalent. It was reported that in the towns the greatest deceits were often practised by the "Chief Officers"—presumably members of the Corporation themselves—"men who ought to reform themselves and others within their jurisdiction." Special care was to be taken on this point, and the names of refractory persons were to be reported to the Council.

With the assistance of and by means of the Clerk of the Market, it was possible to keep a check upon the constables and even on the justices. The grocer was thus continually reminded of his obligations to the public. The Privy Council, through this organisation, could attempt to administer the food-supply of the nation, a work undertaken entirely in the interests of the poor consumer; could control prices so that, for instance, the stock of corn might be economised and made to last from harvest to harvest; and could check the operations of speculative dealers whose own profit was their sole concern, whether it injured the mass of the populace or not.

For the better regulation of trade an Act of Parliament was passed in 1555 by which non-residents were not allowed to sell their wares in any town.

"Whereas the Cities, Boroughs, Town Corporations, and Market Towns, did heretobefore

## THE GROCERY TRADE

flourish where Youths were well-educated and civilly brought up and were highly serviceable to the Government; but were brought to great Decay, and were like to come to utter Ruin and Destruction by Reason that Persons dwelling out of the said Cities and Towns came and took away the Relief and Subsistence of the said Cities and Towns by selling their wares there; for remedy whereof be it enacted, that no person or Persons dwelling anywhere out of the said Cities or Towns (the Liberties of the Universities only excepted) shall hereafter sell or cause to be sold by Retail, any Woollen or Linnen Cloth (except of their own making) or any Haberdashery, Grocery or Mercery Ware at or within any of the said Cities, Boroughs, Towns, Corporations or Market Towns with this realm (except in open Fairs) on Pain to forfeit and lose, for every time so offending, Six shillings and eight pence and the whole wares so sold, offered or proffered to be sold."

Government clearly thought it a duty to interfere with and regulate the development of industry. However, in London and other places, of which we have more or less complete traces, this regulation of trades was done by deputy—that is to say, either specific trade organisations looked after the members of the trade, or more extensive combinations of traders were in existence for this end among others.

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

Thus in Bristol there was the Merchant Venturers Company, one section of which was made up of grocers and the kindred trades ; whilst in Newcastle the spicers appear to have been a section of the Newcastle Merchant Venturers' Company, mentioned in a previous chapter—where the curious oath which the spicers took in presence of the Wardens of the Craft, is set out. In York, also, it was the Merchant Venturers' Company which exercised jurisdiction over the grocer, the Charter granted to them by Queen Elizabeth conferring power among other things—

- (A) To admit into and make free of the Company such persons as they should think fit and convenient, who had served as Apprentices for seven years, and had followed merchandise for ten years :
- (B) To rule and govern the members in all their private causes, plaints, debts and offences.
- (C) To reform, assuage, and pacify all disputes, discords, and controversies between themselves, or between any other persons who should complain to the Governor against any of them.
- (D) To make laws, and ordinances for the good government, rule and order of all persons intromitting, exercising, and using the art and mystery of Merchants or Mercers within the City and the suburbs thereof,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

and also all persons who should show, or expose for sale in their houses any wares, goods and merchandise, from beyond seas, except fish and salt;

(E) and to enforce such laws and ordinances by fines, forfeitures, penalties and imprisonment.

In Dorchester there were five Companies, the chief of which was the Merchants Company, comprising Grocers, Mercers, Haberdashers and Apothecaries.

The traders of Devizes divided themselves into three companies, namely Drapers, Leather-sellers, and Mercers, the latter company including the grocers, bakers and apothecaries. Under their ordinances,

“no foreigner or stranger not being a burgess or inhabitant of the borough and free of the fraternity, to sell within the borough except on fair days any commodities appertaining to either of the trades included by the Fraternity, other than corn, grain, victuals, wools, woollen or linen yarn, woollen or linen cloth of their own making upon pain of forfeiture for every offence forty shillings.”

Several grocers rose to be Masters of this company.

We have, happily, many traces of the position and activities of the grocers of Norwich at this period in the history of the trade. Here, as in

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

London, the grocers were of sufficient importance and number to be formed into a Grocers' Company, and to have committed to them, as thus incorporated, the regulation of the whole trade as it was carried on in both city and suburbs, receiving their powers through the mayor, sheriffs, and citizens.

The Norwich Company was in existence and full vigour during the sixteenth century (as also in the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth) regulating the conduct of the trade within the city, and, as in London, providing for its members participating in civil and religious functions. The records of the Company during the sixteenth century are few and scattered, but they are sufficient to indicate the influence of the Company on the trade in Norwich at that period. In June 1546 for instance a meeting of the Company was held at which an ordinance was passed providing for the regulating of the grocers' weights and measures. The entry in the Grocers' Book was as follows:

"Forasmuche as ye wardeyns had serched thorowe ye Company, and had fownde moch varyete of wyghts and also ye weyghts of ye Guyldhalls is to be st ye lytest, agreed yt one pfyght (perfect) pyle (pile) should be bowgth by ye compayne; and whatsoeuer he be of that Company yt occupye any other wayghts after a certayn day not agreeabyll wt those weyghts, shall be fynable by ye dyscrecon of ye Compayne."

## THE GROCERY TRADE

To open business as a grocer in the town it was necessary to obtain the sanction of the Company, and a record is extant of one Henry Holden paying a fee of 20s. to "be allowed (to be) a grocer and one of ye Company."

When it is considered that 2*d.* was the fee to a chaplain in those days for saying evensong, and that 5*d.* was the amount spent for dates, almonds, and perfumes disbursed on a festival occasion, it will be perceived that 20*s.* was a sufficiently large sum to be a matter of moment.

The method adopted by the Company for the election of officers is worth recording, it being laid down that

"Ye too old wardens shall go by themselff and chose 4 men of ye same company there present, and there elecon made and presentyd to ye Company that those 4 men shuld by themselff chose 8 more to them. After ther Elecon made and presented to ye Company then those 12 shuld go together and chose first the Aldermen, and then too of ye rest of ye hole fellowshyppe, not beyng any of ye XXIIII Aldermen of ye Citie to be wardeyns for ye yere folowyng. And those Wardeyns newe chosen and ye 12 before chosen to be called ye Counsell of ye Company of ye Grocers and Raphemen for ye yere followyn.

It was further laid down that the ordinances of the said twenty-four persons for the common-

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

wealth and good governance of the aforesaid fellowship, should stand and be obeyed of all the said Company and Fellowship.

In addition the Company conducted a yearly pageant in conjunction with the other trade companies of the city—full particulars of which I have given in chapter xiii. The Council of the Company also determined that all the Company should hear mass yearly on the Sunday after Corpus Christi day (the Thursday after Trinity Sunday) and after mass should dine together. Each person should offer a halfpenny at mass, and for dinner every man was to pay for himself 8*d.* and for his wife 4*d.* and every widow 6*d.* The members of the Company were to bring their wives to mass and dinner, and all widows whose husbands had been enrolled grocers were also to attend.

The records show that the meetings for election of officers and for assessment were held in the spring of each year. At the assembly of the Company of Grocers holden at the Black Fryers May 8, 1534, Mr. Robert Greene was chosen Alderman of the Company; whilst two Wardens, two ‘Assisters,’ four Surveyors of the Pageant, and one Bedell were appointed. An assessment was made which produced 22*s.* 10*d.* This was for the purposes of the Pageant and the way the money was expended is detailed, including such curious items as :

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Sope to gresse ye wheles . . . . .	1d.
Oryngys (oranges) . . . . .	10d.
A new Heer, w'a crown for ye Serpent .	6d.
For mendyng of ye Gryffyn and off ye Father's Gloves . . . . .	10d.

At that of May 5, 1543, it was agreed that  
“every man beyng a Grocer Inrollyd in ye  
Cyte of Norwiche shall ye Sondaye next aftyr  
Corp. Xi day, come to ye Common Halle  
Chappell at 9 of y<sup>e</sup> clocke in ye forenoone  
and there here masse.”

The most interesting particulars of this Company appear however, in the Bylaws, Ordinances and Constitutions made, ordained, and appointed at an assembly of the Mayor, Sheriff, Citizens and Commonalty at the latter part of the seventeenth century. The document, preserved among the Norwich Corporation records, begins with the assertion that the power of making such laws, &c., within the City has been granted to the Mayor, by divers charters and grants made by the Sovereign at various times, and proceeds :

“ Forasmuch as the Citizens of this City using the Trade Mistery and occupation of the Grocers’ Craft being an Ancient Trade had and used in this City, have complained that the said Ancient Trade is now much abused and abased by divers interloping and petty retailing Shopkeepers (and other tradesmen) which are indeed no Grocers

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

nor have been Apprentices nor served as Apprentices or been brought up in the same trade . . . to the great hindrance of the Grocers of this City . . . who by means of such Usurpation of the said trade by (such interlopers petty retailers) Weavers, Shoemakers, Taylors, Masons, Hostlers, Young Women and Maids fitt for service (and other tradesmen not being grocers) are not, or in short time shall not be able to maintain their families or to pay to His Majesty such duties and to beare in this City such charges to the Poore and otherwise as of them are from time to time necessarily required. Unless some speedy remedy according to the Laws Customs and ancient usuages of this City may be had, and the evills aforesaid may thereby be timely taken away and prevented . . . It is enacted, ordered, constituted and ordained at this present Court of Assembly . . .

“ That the Grocers and Raffemen called Tallow Chandlers and Confectioners called Sugar Bakers in this City and the County thereof which now are ffreemen of the said City and doe now use the same Crafts and Misteries and have bin Apprentices or Hearafter shall Be Apprentices by the space of seaven yeares thereunto and be and shall be ffreemen of the said City shall from henceforth be a ffellowship and Company of Grocers of the said City according to the ancient usages and customes of the same City.”

## THE GROCERY TRADE

The Assembly further agreed :

1. That no one was to be allowed to use the trade of the Grocer other than freemen or widows of freemen.
2. That every Grocer being a freeman might be compelled upon notice by the Headman or Wardens of the Company, to attend four quarterly meetings during the year, "to confer and take notice of things behovefull for the good of the trade."
3. That no Grocer should keep more than two apprentices, or employ a boy more than three months before binding him as apprentice.
4. That no grocer's son was to be made free of the Company by redemption or purchase unless he had first served as apprentice to the trade.
5. That searchers were to be appointed by the Company who should at least four times in every year "search in every convenient and suspected places between the sun rising and setting, for defective grocery wares and defective weights, scales, and beams in the shops or in the suspected places of all persons exposing grocery for sale." Such searchers were to proceed against such offenders according to the law. Any grocer interfering with such officers or their assistants was to forfeit 20s. for each offence.
6. Any person using the Trade or Mystery of the Grocer should not either by themselves or any third party directly or indirectly keep more than one shop at the same time.

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

Offenders were liable to a fine of 10s. for each offence. The Ordinances also stipulated that:

“whereas many persons goe basely about wan-dring in the streets and Market Place of the City with Grocery Wares and sell wares in their hands and doe otherwiles offer and putt the same to sale by Retayle in Basketts and Poakes and such like and sell their wares disorderly upon Stalls, Trussells, Boards, Bulkes, and upon the ground to the great hindrance of Shopkeepers and Grocers that be Ffreemen of this City and whereby many deceits and frauds may be committed and not easily detected and punished. It is now therefore further ordained and enacted that no person by himselfe or by any other person or persons for his or her use or benefitt directly or indirectly shall sett up or use any Booth, Stall, bulke of Shopp, Trussell or Board, or make any other provisions upon this ground or otherwise to lay or hang his her or their wares to sell, or put to sale shall in the open Market Place, or other streets of this City other than decently within a house, a shopp where they dwell, sell, offer, or putt to sale any Grocery wares by retayle or shall goe hawking after the manner of Pedlars or Petty Chapmen about the streets of the City or Suburbs thereof with any such wares to the intent to sell or offer the same to sale upon payne of fforfeiture for

## THE GROCERY TRADE

every day and tyme soe offending six shillings and eight pence."

Provision was made for the recovery of the fines by officers of the City, and such fines were to be divided into three equal proportions, one-third to go to the Mayor of the City for the time being, to be put into hamper for the benefit of the poor; one-third to go to the Wardens of the Company of Grocers, for the using and benefit of the poor of the Company; and one-third to the person or persons who first gave information of the offence.

An annual meeting was appointed whereat the officers of the Company should be chosen, the said officers to be sworn before the Mayor within a month of their appointment. A rule provided that the ordinances should be read at every assembly of the Company—a rather lengthy proceeding.

The ordinances further stated that the goods in the selling of which the trade of a grocer was defined to consist were

" raysons, currants, sugar, spice, sope, candle, molasses, gunpowder, shot, match, tar, pitch, rozen, tobacco and pipes, cotton wool, cotton yarn, starch, blueing, rise, linseed, oil, white and red lead, olives, prunes, figs, Spanish white alabaster, alum, almonds, brimstone, lamp-black, and candle-rushes, and such other commodities as do properly belong to the Grocers of the City to sell."

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

It would be difficult indeed to get a better and more detailed picture of the status of the grocer in a large provincial town than is disclosed by this set of ordinances of the period. That the ring fence which he endeavoured to build round himself, his doings, and his trade was intended to make it a close preserve is evident. The policy lasted for some years after this date. It was bound, however, to give way and become obsolete with the growth of English commerce and of the population, and with the increase of facilities in communication by land and by sea.

The ordinance of the traders of Windsor may also be taken as typical of the local trade regulations of the time. This stated, *inter alia*:

“No Draper, Mercer, Haberdasher, Hatseller, Grocer, Petty Chapmen, or other retailer and victualler of all sorts, . . . the like whereof, are not made or traded in this Towne only excepted . . . shall show or sell upon the market and weeke day, except faire dayes, any of the above mentioned wares upon forfeiture, after reasonable admonition [of] all such wares &c.”

An indication of the privileges of the grocers at the same period is given in an ordinance made at Kendal, March 24, 1653, that

“woollen drapers shall sell all sorts of woollen cloth including hats and bands, that the mercers and haberdashers of small wares shall be counted

## THE GROCERY TRADE

as one trade, that grocers shall sell grocery wares, apothecary wares, dyeing stuffs and whatsoever is sold by the hundredweight and gallon measure, and that linen cloth shall be used in common until some will undertake to manage that trade."

Similar restrictions appear to have existed at Darlington, and we find a grocer appealing to the bishop of the diocese for a special licence to trade, the result being that the Bishop of Durham granted him the following singular licence in 1661 :

" To all Justices of Peace, Bailiffs, and all other officers whatsoever within the County Palatine of Durham, and Sadberge, greeting.

" KNOW YE—that whereas we have been informed credibly on behalf of Henry Shaw, Yeoman, that he is a free Boroughman of Darlington, and that he and his ancestors have sold Grocerys and other wayres in Darlington as a Chapman there, and that he hath noe other trade or calling whereby he can maintain his wife and many small children and famillie having only one small house in Darlington and having been lately molested for using that trade *not* having serued as apprentice thereunto by the space of seven years contrary to the form of the statute in that case made and provided and still greatly fearing to be troubled for the same WEE nevertheless hearing that the said Henry Shaw is of good name and faime amongst his

## TRADE GOVERNMENT

neighbours and having consideration of his poor estate for diverse causes vs moving as much as in vs is are content to lycence tolerate and suffer the said Henry Shaw to vse and exercise the trade and occupation of a Grocer or Merchant or Chapman within the Town of Darlington aforesaid and elsewhere within the said County Palatine of Durham and Sadberge not willing that he in or for exercising the said trade shall from henceforth be impeached molested, fined, sued or any way disquieted by vs, or our successors, or any Justice, Sheriffs or other Bailiffs or Officers within the County Palatine aforesaid for any fine forfeiture or penalties which by reason thereof or by force of the statute thereof to vs or our successors shall be due or appertaining."

Traders in London were subject to severer and more far-reaching restrictions, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XII

### TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

THE references in previous chapters to the part played by the Grocers' Company of London in the development of the trade cannot fail to possess more than a passing interest for trade students.

It is, however, in its more direct dealings with and on behalf of its members that we find the curtain raised upon some of the most interesting personalities and scenes in the whole history of this trade. More particularly is this so towards the latter part of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The Grocers' Hall was then the scene of much animation and of many exciting incidents. Grocers came and went, some to petition the Company to act on their behalf against the encroachments of the monopolists, others to pray to be excused from serving the office of Warden or Master. One would come to lodge a complaint against an unruly apprentice, whilst another would seek to defend himself against the charges of the searchers of the Company. Another would be seeking a benevolent grant, while a young man

## TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

would approach to petition for a loan. On certain days the Court of the Company would sit in solemn conclave to hear cases and fine or otherwise punish offenders. These leaders of the trade were very jealous of its reputation, and they meted out punishment without fear or favour. At the date in question the Company's powers and the way they were exercised were by no means innovations, for according to the privileges and ancient usages of the Grocers' Company of London, the Wardens had the power of entering the warehouses and shops of all persons who followed the trade of grocers, apothecaries and druggists, for the purpose of inspecting the articles they dealt in, with a view to preventing adulteration, and likewise assaying their weights.

We read that in April 1603 the Members of the Company were called together, “ and the ordinances were read to them with straight admonition and warning given unto them to occupy good and wholesome wares, and that they buy no wares ungarbelled and also to take the allowance of trett according to the old order and custom of the Company.”

There are frequent entries in the records of the Company to show that the Wardens regularly discharged their duty in protecting the public from the sale of defective groceries, and in their travels they examined the spices, prunes, figs, raisins, treacle, and other wares with the keen and practised

## THE GROCERY TRADE

eye of veterans of the trade, in order to see that a due standard of purity and quality was maintained.

Thus a few years before the following examples of their vigilance may be adduced :

William Johnson was fined in 1582 the sum of ten shillings for having 6 ozs. of ungarbled cloves in his possession ; Stephen Burton and William Yrryll were found to have corrupt raisins for sale, and these were confiscated and ordered to be burnt. One Ralph King and certain others, &c., in 1571 were charged before the Wardens for dismeanours in mingling starch with sugar, “and such other things as be not tolerated nor suffered.” They were ordered to enter into bonds of £20 each “That they shall not hereafter make any bisketts but with cleare sugar onely nor make any comfitts that shall be wrought upon seeds or any other things but with cleare sugar onlie.”

The task of supervising their fellow members was not always a congenial one, this oversight being often resented by the delinquent, as, for instance, in 1582, when John Chean, who had been caught with  $27\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of ungarbled cloves in his possession, had the audacity to suggest to the Court that there was not a retailer sitting there but who did not buy the like. For this “unreverent” speech he was forthwith fined 40s.

Punishment did not always stop at a fine in those comparatively rough-and-ready days. A case in point is that of a cheesemonger who in 1560 was

## TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

charged with selling “Measle” bacon. He was convicted, and in punishment of this offence compelled to ride about London on horseback, his face to the tail of the horse. He was then placed in the pillory, and two large pieces of the “Measle” bacon were hung over his head, with a notice in writing that he had been convicted in two years for the same offence.

In 1611 the Company appointed John Mynshall the Official Searcher at an annual salary of £5, and he was authorised to “diligently and truly search and survey the several markets, streets, lanes, and other places within the said City, liberties and suburbs thereof, and cause all such grocery wares to be seized taken and brought to Grocers’ Hall in London, which he shall find there to be corrupt, defective or unwholesome for man’s body, and offered for sale to his Majesty’s subjects.”

This official continued to do his duty for some years to come.

Owing to the prevailing sickness in 1636, however, the usual search of grocery wares was dispensed with, but in 1649 it was ordered that the search be again revived and evil goods destroyed.

In addition, however, to their oversight over grocery wares, the Company also kept an eye upon interlopers, and in 1601 a petition was presented to the Court by certain retail grocers complaining of “certain lewd and idle people uttering and selling grocery wares up and down the streets which are

## THE GROCERY TRADE

both nought and unwholesome, to the great offence of Almighty God, the dishonour of this City and a great reproach to your Worshipfull Company." It was agreed to approach the Lord Mayor on the subject, with a view to this abuse being remedied.

In 1610 the Grocers' Company was called upon to appeal to the Court of Aldermen of the City for protection on behalf of one of their members. It appears that Robert Phipps, grocer, had recently bound as an apprentice William Filder for a term of eight years, of which period he had served three. His employer, Mr. Phipps, had omitted to enrol him in accordance with the customs of the City within the first year of his apprenticeship, and Filder, taking advantage of this omission, had obtained a discharge from his service, and had afterwards, "against the ancient custom of the City and the laudable ordinances of the said Grocers' Company," and without seeking their permission, engaged himself to a Mr. John Gibson, a member of the Company of Girdlers, with whom he had been employed up to about a fortnight before the Christmas preceding, when, to the astonishment of his previous employer, taking advantage of the knowledge acquired during his term of apprenticeship, he had, with the said Gibson, opened a grocer's shop, "to the great preijudice and hindraunce as well of the said Robert Phipps by intisinge and drawinge his Customers from him as of all other

## TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

freemen of the said Company of Grocers, usinge  
the said trade of Grocerye."

The Court of Aldermen, having considered the case, ordered that the said William Filder should from henceforth "remayne sequestred and be kept at the Charges of the said Robert Phipps from the dwellinge lodginde servinge or beinge wth the said John Gibson in any sorte (otherwise then to fetch his apparell or other necessaries from him and that wth an officer either of this Court or of the said Company of Grocers) in such place and wth such psons as Mr. Thomas Nutt one of the said Wardens shall appointe, thinke fitt till the said Filder or any other frynd for him shall finde such a sufficyent Maister free of the said Company of Grocers and usinge the arte or misterye of Grocerye wth in this Citty as the said Mr. Chamberlen or Mr. Wardens or any of them shall like, allowe of to serve the rest of his said terme of Apprenticeshippe yet to come."

The early part of the century under review found not only drugs, but sugar and tobacco, engaging the attention of the Grocers and of their Company. In a previous chapter I have mentioned the introduction of sugar, and the petition for a monopoly of sugar-refining.

Some interesting correspondence of the year 1616 throws a valuable sidelight on the history of the sugar-refining trade. Incidentally one can gather from it that the Government held the Lord

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Mayor and other City authorities in some sense responsible for the trade misdoings of those within their jurisdiction; that the office of "King's Grocer" was an appointment then in existence; and also that the grocers of the time had to face a condition of things created by the importation of cheap sugar from Holland—so does history repeat itself.

In 1615 complaint had been made to the Board of Green Cloth of the "badness and ill-condition" of the sugar supplied to his Majesty's house. The Board—then, apparently, as now, the department which had the duty of selecting those tradesmen upon whom the orders of the Court for various supplies should be bestowed, and from which the royal warrants of appointment as purveyors to the king emanate—took the matter up at once, and examined Mr. W. Barratt, the "King's Grocer," as to the cause. This worthy, like the grocer of to-day, had probably nothing to do with the manufacture of the sugar, and accordingly stated it as his opinion that the fault was the refiners', and that many grocers in and about the City could testify the same. The Board of Green Cloth accordingly wrote to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen requesting them to call Mr. Barratt and others before them, and take such steps for the making of better sugar as in their judgment might be fitting.

The said refiners, however, were not willing to take the allegation of Mr. Barratt, the "King's

## TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

Grocer," "lying down." They formulated an answer to the charges, and in quite the style of modern times complained of foreign competition as a contributing cause in the production of the unsatisfactory sugar complained of by the Court. They state that they made the sugar of good, wholesome material, but that in making large quantities some few loaves may be of second quality, and that these are sold at a penny a pound cheaper, though of the same substance as the best. (Was this an attempt of the refiners to imply that Mr. Barratt had charged the Court for the first quality sugar and sent in second ?) They went on to state that

"The best refined Sugar coming from the Low Countries was much worse than even their second sort, and caused much false imputation upon their Sugars."

Clearly, here was a case of unfair foreign competition, the foreign produce being palmed off as English. Finally, Mr. Barratt and others, it was alleged, had been forward in setting up strangers and others in the City to supplant the London refiners who, as was but natural in those days, religiously resented any encroachments upon what they regarded as their own sacred preserves. The sugar-refiners of that period, as a distinctive trade, had no special status in the City of London, they being principally composed of men who, not having

## THE GROCERY TRADE

discovered success in other callings, had been attracted to sugar-refining as a more profitable means of livelihood.

The seven or eight sugar-refiners in London at that date included Martin Freeman, an ex-salter, Ralph Busby, an ex-grocer, John Juxon, an ex-merchant tailor, Stephen Scott, an ex-haberdasher, Thomas Juxon, an ex-soap-boiler, Gilbert Keete, an ex-grocer, and John Short, an ex-ironmonger. In addition to these English refiners there was also a Dutch refinery in Duke's Place, run by Jacques de Bee and Klin Renberry.

The refiners were not subject to the control of any City company, no one had a right of trade search, and as a result they conducted their business much according to their own inclinations.

The English refiners, through not having served an apprenticeship, found it necessary to employ Dutchmen from Antwerp, the then home of the sugar-refining industry, to undertake the management of their works.

The Wardens of the Grocers' Company, not unnaturally, had an eye upon this state of affairs, and it was regarded as anything but satisfactory. In the opinion of the grocers the said refiners not only combined together to buy the raw sugar in bulk, but they also agreed upon the selling price, increasing it at their pleasure, regardless of the quality, "to the great damage and prejudice of the freemen" of the City.

## TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

Matters had reached this stage in October 1615, when one Paul Tynmerman, a naturalised Dutchman, sought and obtained the approval of the Grocers' Company to set up a new sugar refinery in the City.

The London refiners were much disturbed by this development, and they petitioned the City Council against it, urging that it was against the general freedom of the City and the statutes of the realm. They further urged that

“ It is dangerous in example, for if way be given to this man's desire in this particular, it will be an encouragement to other aliens to attempt the like, both in this and other trades, and a discouragement to the endeavours of our own nation, when without any necessity aliens shall be set up and maintained to root the English out of their trade, and in this particular the English refiners make more refined sugars than the Kingdom doth spend. The suffering of strangers to have sugar houses in this kingdom will be the decay of merchandise and therewith of the shipping of the kingdom. . . . They will bring in sugars for their own refining in their foreign ships as they now at this time have done, which will grow to the impoverishing of our marines and a hindrance of our navigation. They do not maintain their exportation (for the sugars which they bring in) with the manufacturers of this

## THE GROCERY TRADE

land as they ought by the statute of employment, but do make their return of what they import either by the coin and treasure of this kingdom or else at the best upon their bills of exchange."

This seventeenth-century onslaught bears a marked resemblance to modern Protection theories.

The matters were referred to the Privy Council, but it appears that in the end Paul Tynmerman gained the day after having promised not to stock more than £6000 worth of sugar at any one time.

When, a month later, the complaint was made by the Board of Green Cloth, previously referred to, it was but natural that the refiners should seek to attribute the blame to the new departure.

The controversy was renewed in 1633, when a complaint was made by certain City merchants and refiners that three strangers, John Gibbs, John Therry, and James Therry, had set up a refining house without Bishopsgate, contrary to an Order of the Council of two months previously prohibiting all strangers and sons of strangers from carrying on the trade of refiners of sugar. The City agreed to oppose the newcomers, and gave instructions accordingly.

The refiners were subsequently brought under the supervision of the Grocers' Company, as will be seen later.

In the reign of James I. the custom already mentioned of giving sugar-loaves as presents was

## TRADE OVERSIGHT IN LONDON

still in vogue. Thus it was quite a recognised practice with the Colchester Corporation (as we learn from its records) to make presents of sugar-loaves to persons of rank and state from whom they expected favour and protection, and in the Chamberlain's account we read of the best refined sugar costing in the year 1607 2*s.* 2*d.* a pound, and the second quality 1*s.* 10*d.* That upright and incorruptible judge Sir Matthew Hale (1600-75), who was ever deaf to private recommendation and application from persons concerned in cases brought before him, was once, when on circuit, presented with six sugar-loaves by the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury, whose cause he had to try. Malcolm tells us that he bade his servants pay for the sugar before the case came on.

The records of Chippenham also relate that in 1654 one John Steevens was paid £1 5*s.* for six sugar-loaves, weighing 18½ pounds, at 1*s.* 4*d.* per pound, which were presented by the town to Colonel Popham. The books of the Grocers' Company also record that on December 15, 1625, "the Wardens were directed to present Lord Coventry with 20 sugar-loaves," and such other spices as the Wardens should think fit, to the full value of £20, "as a free and loving gratuity from the Court." Two years later Lord Coventry had the freedom of the Company conferred upon him.

Turning to tobacco, the other great commodity which just now comes to the fore, we may note

## THE GROCERY TRADE

that the "weed" was introduced from the East by Sir John Hawkins, although the popular hero to whom tradition assigns the honour of having been the originator of smoking in England is Sir Walter Raleigh. Various authors assign different dates to its introduction. Stowe, in his "Annals," says that "tobacco came into England about the twentieth year of Queen Elizabeth (1577)." Taylor, the "Water Poet," assigns an earlier date, saying that "tobacco was brought into England in 1565 by Sir John Hawkins." It was not long before its use caught on, for in the next reign we find James I. speaking of those who spent as much as £300 per year on the weed, which he deemed noxious and detested with all his soul, but from which he was glad enough to draw a part of his revenue. Snuff was also much used; in fact, in a few years the use of tobacco obtained over the whole country, so that a contemporary writer could assert that most men and women took their pipe of tobacco every day with as much regularity as their cup of wine or tankard of ale.

It was the grocer, at this period, who, besides dealing in what we should understand nowadays as "groceries," combined with it also the selling of drugs, and now added the sale of tobacco to his other goods. The grocer's shop became the rendezvous of the fops of the day, anxious to learn the secrets of the latest innovation and to acquire the perfect art of indulging therein.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PAGEANTRY

THE sixteenth century, which I have strictly overshot in preceding chapters, was a time of great activity and many changes. It saw, amongst other things, the transition from the old “mystery” play to the civic pageant. Now the civic pageant was not infrequently a trade pageant—a grocers’ pageant. There is fortunately extant a series of extracts from Grocers’ records showing the proceedings and expenditure of the Norwich Grocers’ Company about their pageant from 1534 to 1570; also the version of the play in use in 1533, and a revised and corrected version used in 1536.

Anciently the pageant, as presented to the good citizens of Norwich, had been provided by the Guild of St. Luke of that city. In 1526, however, the guild presented a petition to the Mayor and Council of Norwich praying to be relieved from the burden of providing solely the plays and pageants for the people on Whit-Monday and Tuesday, suggesting at the same time that each “occupation” within the city should take a share

## THE GROCERY TRADE

in the work by annually setting out a pageant. Such petition being agreed to, it was enacted that henceforth every occupation within the said city should find and set forth one such pageant as should be appointed by the Mayor and Aldermen. The following pageants were among those agreed to :

1. Mercers, Drapers,  
Haberdashers . . Creation of the World
2. Glaziers, Stainers,  
Carpenters, &c. . Helle Carte
3. Grocers and Raffe-  
men . . . Paradise
4. Shermen, Fullers,  
Masons, &c. . Abel and Cain
5. Bakers, Brewers,  
Cooks, Millers Noyse Ship (*i.e.*, Noah's  
Ark)
6. Tailors and Bro-  
derers . . Abram and Isaac

And so on right through the Scripture history until we come to the "Day of Final Judgment."

The Grocers' was acted from a carriage described as "A Howse of Waynscott paynted and buylded on a cart with fowre whelys." It was drawn by four horses having "headstalles of brode Imple with knepps and tassells." The full title of the play was "The Storye of Man in Paradyce," the actors personified including The Father, Adam, Eve, "The Serpent," "Doler," "Myserye," and various musicians.

## PAGEANTRY

In 1565 an inventory of the “Properties” which were kept by the Grocers’ Company of Norwich for the yearly pageant enumerates, among other quaint items, “A Gryffon, gylte, with a fane to sett on ye sayde toppe, a rybbe colleryed Red [from which Eve was made ?], a Cote and hosen and tayle for ye serpents, stayned, with a white heure ; and Angell’s cote and overhoses of Aphis Skynns ; and a cote of yellow buckram wt ye *Grocers’ arms* for ye Pendon bearer.” Last of all there are enumerated “weights,” which belonged to the serious side of life, one would think, rather than to the recreative.

It may be mentioned that the “Gryffon,” which probably had some allusion to the Grocers’ arms, was painted and gilt. It was borne by a lad, and incense was burned in it, probably that the smoke might escape by the nostrils of the ferocious creature !

However, the whole custom fell into disuse and the final destruction of the materials for the pageant came about in the year 1570, when, because the surveyors of the Company would not pay for the house-room given for properties in the gatehouse of one Mr. Nicholas Southerton, they were put out in the street and allowed to become weather-beaten and rotten. After six years of such exposure the remains of the properties were offered for sale at 20s., but no one desiring to buy, they were handed over to Southerton in satisfaction for his claim for rent. Thus ended the Grocers’ Pageant at Norwich.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

In London “Grocers’ Pageants” were to wax instead of wane, for the Elizabethan and succeeding reigns were the age of London’s civic pageants. On all sorts of occasions there were pageants, which were set forth with great magnificence and the quaintest of conceits. Poets were engaged to sing the praises of the period, and the day was one of merry-making generally, those taking part being astir as early as seven o’clock. Of these great popular spectacles not a few were contributed by the grocers and Grocers’ Companies.

On the occasion of a grocer being elected Lord Mayor of London the Masters, Wardens, and Assistants of the Company would assemble at Grocers’ Hall, as also would the members of the Livery, the Batchelors, Gentlemen Ushers, and Pensioners. They would be accompanied by bandsmen and pages, and other attendants necessary for the day’s proceedings, each of whom would be allocated to their different positions in the procession of the Foot Marshal. The pageants were got up without regard to expense. The one arranged for the Right Hon. George Rowles in 1617 cost the Company £882 18s. 11d. Of this sum £282 was paid to the designer, Mr. Thomas Middleton, for his services, which included the writing of the pageant and the furnishing of the various scenes. It was customary for the Grocers’ Company, on the occasion of one of their members being raised to the Mayoralty, to distribute broad-





A FEATURE OF THE PAGEANT, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

## PAGEANTRY

cast among the crowds assembled on those occasions samples of the wares sold by grocers, such as raisins, almonds, figs, dates, and prunes. A young negro boy, gorgeously attired in an Indian robe of divers colours, with a wreath of various coloured feathers on his head, and with silver buskins laced and surfled with gold, would appear seated upon a stage camel, with two silver panniers, one on each side, filled with all kinds of fruits and spices, described as the “delicious Traffic of the Grocers’ Company,” and at a given moment he would scatter them abroad, it being the usual sight, to quote a writer of the period, “to see a hundred persons confusedly scrambling in the dirt for a frail achievement of a bunch of raisins or a handful of dates, almonds or nutmegs” (*see Illustration*).

In 1613 a spectacle, to quote the words of the designer, “unparalleled for cost, art and magnificence” took place at the installation of Sir Thomas Middleton, grocer, as Lord Mayor of London. It was called “The Triumphs of Truth,” and took the form of a water spectacle on the River Thames. The pageant consisted of “five islands artfully garnished with all manner of Indian fruit trees, Drugs, Spices, and the like, the middle island with a fair Castle especially beautified.” Among those who attended the Lord Mayor in the pageant were “Truth’s Angel,” on horseback, in a raiment of white silk powdered with stars of gold, and on his head a crown of gold. He was preceded by a trumpeter

## THE GROCERY TRADE

on horseback, while behind him followed "Zeal," the champion of "Truth," dressed in silk and mounted on horseback, and holding in his right hand a flaming scourge. The procession proceeded from the river towards the City, encountering on its way "Error," in a chariot, followed by "Envy" who were speedily compelled to retire before the onslaughts of "Zeal." The procession then proceeded to St. Paul's Churchyard, whither it had been preceded by the five islands previously referred to. At this point a ship appears containing a "King of the Moor," and his Queen and his attendants. The King addresses the Lord Mayor, and other speeches followed, after which the procession proceeds on its way into Cheapside, where it passes "the chief grace and lustre of the whole Triumph," namely, "London's Triumphant Mount." As the procession approached, the Mount is enveloped in fog. Seated at its four corners are "Barbarism," "Ignorance," "Impudence," and "Falsehood." "Truth" commands them to flee, and as they vanish the cloud of fog rises, and is transformed into a bright spreading canopy, and at the top of the Mount is seen a figure representing "London," surrounded by personifications of "Religion," "Liberality," and "Love." On either side of the Mount are displayed the charitable and religious works of London, especially of the Company of Grocers, in giving maintenance to scholars, soldiers, widows,

## PAGEANTRY

and orphans ; while other emblematical figures of “ Knowledge,” “ Modesty,” “ Chastity,” “ Fame,” “ Simplicity,” and “ Weakness ” are set on various parts of the Mount.

After an address from “ London,” in which the newly elected Lord Mayor is exhorted to deeds of charity, the whole procession moves on, first to the Cross in Cheapside, and then to the “ Standard,” stopping at both places to enable the spectators to witness a combat between “ Truth ” and “ Error.” Another speech from “ London,” and a few words of good counsel from “ Perfect Love,” who reminds them that

He that desires days healthful, sound and blest,  
Let moderate judgment serve him at his feast,

and the Lord Mayor and his company pass into the Guildhall to dine. At the conclusion of the feast they return, accompanied by the pageant, to attend the religious ceremony annually performed at St. Paul’s.

The ceremony over, all return homewards, “ full of beauty and brightness.” Another eulogistic outburst from “ London,” and then a further dissertation by “ Truth,” who reminds the Lord Mayor that

I have set thee high now, be so in example,  
Made thee a Pinnacle in honour’s temple  
Fixing ten thousand eyes upon thy brow,  
There is no hiding of thy actions now,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

and prays that he may continue the good works of his predecessor with

Truth in thy heart, and plenty in thy hall,  
Love in thy walks, but justice in thy state,  
Zeal in thy chamber, bounty at thy gate,  
And so to thee and these a Blessed Night,  
To thee fair city, Peace, my Grace and Light.

Four years later, in 1617, another grocer, Mr. George Bowles, was elected Lord Mayor. Thomas Middleton, the dramatist, was again engaged to write the pageant, and, with his eyes fixed on possible future engagements, he referred to the Company of Grocers in his introduction as “this noble society where I have always met men of much understanding and no less bounty to whom cost appears as a shadow so there be fulness of content in the performance of the solemnity.” When we recollect that the pageant cost nearly £900, as against £600 spent by Queen Elizabeth on her masques, and that the accessories purchased or hired included 714 torches, 124 gowns, 183 caps, 288 staves for the whippers, 124 javelins, 8 drums and 4 pipes, 18 long swords, 50 sugar-loaves, 36 pounds of nutmegs, 24 pounds of dates, and 114 pounds of ginger, we can well understand the lavish expenditure of the Company referred to.

No fewer than three dramatists aspired to write the pageant for this year—Anthony Munday, who had been responsible for the Fishmongers’ pageant the year before (the designs for which are still

## PAGEANTRY

preserved by that Company); Thomas Dekker, who is known to have arranged the Ironmongers' pageant twelve years later; and Thomas Middleton, who succeeded in gaining the ear of the Grocers. The Company paid Mr. Munday £5 and Mr. Dekker £4 for their trouble in drawing up and submitting their projects.

The pageant provided on this occasion included three chariots. The first chariot represented a company of Indians engaged at work on a Spice Island, some planting nutmeg and others trees, some gathering the fruit, some taking up bags of pepper. The second chariot represented "India supported by Merchandise and Industry." Into the mouth of the latter the dramatist put the following speech :

Where has not Industry a noble friend?  
In this assembly even the best extend  
Their grace and love to me joy'd or amazed :  
Who of true fame possessed but I have raised,  
And after added honours to he days,  
For industry is the life blood of praise.  
To rise without me is to steel to glory,  
And who so object to leave such a story ?  
It is as dear as light, as bright as truth,  
Fame waits their age, when industry their youth.

The third chariot represented a "Castle of Fame and Honour," whereon was shown several memorable worthies of the Grocers' Company and former Lord Mayors, including Andrew Fokerel, Alan de la Zouch, and Sir Thomas Knolles.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

The Pageant performed on October 29, 1681, at the insurrection of Sir John Moore as Lord Mayor was devised and composed by Thomas Jordon. Sir John Moore was a grocer, and hence the pageant is full of allusions to the trade, mingled with tributes said by all sorts of allegorical characters. The first scene included the camel—albeit “artificial but well served”—which is an animal described as “proper for the Company’s crest by reason of its uses in the transportation of their fruit and spices in India and other parts.” The negro with his silver panniers is duly mounted on the camel’s back—the populace would have been sorely disappointed had not this accustomed feature of the pageant appeared. Other symbolical figures which accompanied the body were “two virgin ladies,” representing Abundance and Wholesomeness, their apparel being designed to represent these two qualities as typical of the trade of the grocer. The first, who carried a silver basket, had a robe of white silk sprinkled all over with cloves, and a garland of dates, with leaves and branches, adorned her hair. The second bore a wreath of saffron flowers intermingled with green leaves, and in one hand carried an almond-tree, with leaves, blossoms, and fruit. The young negro was common to all the pageants, and the ingenuity of the director chosen for the occasion was exercised in varying the other details.

Other features of the scene were the representa-

## PAGEANTRY

tion of a “ Royal Theatre,” built in the Ionic style, which accommodated the Seven Champions of Christendom, to wit :

St. George for England  
St. Denis for France  
St. David for Wales

St. Andrew for Scotland  
St. Patrick for Ireland  
St. James for Spain,

together with St. Anthony (for Italy) as the ancient patron of the Grocers’ Company, the latter bearing a shield charged with an olive tree, with its leaves, blossoms, and fruit. This figure, St. Anthony, was the speaker of verses arranged for him in his capacity as patron to the Grocers. Besides the Champions, the five senses were also symbolised, each represented by a woman gorgeously dressed.

A second scene followed, introduced by the two griffins of the Grocers’ arms, ridden respectively by “ Jocundity ” and “ Utility,” led by two pretty boys. Here was doubtless a subtle allusion to the two qualities which especially distinguished the goods dealt in by the grocer. Eight figures accompanied this piece of symbolism, typifying Power, Prudence, Fate, Fame, Fertility, Integrity, Agility, and Alacrity. The feature of the second scene, however, was “ a delightful and magnificent fabrick worthy of an artful man’s examination, called the Academy of Sciences, on which were placed learned philosophers, and prudent women, including Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Diogenes, and Dictima.” Other figures were the Four

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Elements and Four Complexions, represented by “eight virgin ladies.” Diogenes has his tub with him all complete, and, issuing from it, addresses the Lord Mayor in serio-comic vein. These topical lines occur :

Truth is the same, altho' taught in a tub :  
I have dwelt in a butt, in days of yore,  
But ne'er taught in a currant-butt before.  
The Grocers lent it me, and I'm as well  
Pleas'd as if planted in a citadel.

Diogenes, concluding his speech, re-enters his currant-butt, and the second scene thus concluded. The third scene contains an “ Indian Garden of Spices,” over which a figure representing Fructifera presides, with four other delightful ladies to attend her, representing Fragra, Florida, Delicia, and Placentia. The costly and elaborate robes are described as decorated with fruits such as oranges, lemons, pomegranates, and “ Indian fruits ” of divers kinds. The governess of the garden is provided with a rhyming speech, which she addresses to the Lord Mayor. The four virgins who bear her company are under her command, and

From India to London now their trade is  
To please my Lord Mayor and delight the Ladies  
You make your feasts on which we have been planting,  
Then is it fit that Plenty should be wanting  
In such a place as this. I have heard by some,  
London's the dining-room of Christendom.

## PAGEANTRY

A reputation the City seems even now to do its best to live up to ! The speech concluded, several planters, tumblers, &c., all black men and women, appear on the stage and delight his lordship (not to speak of the spectators) with their antics. One of them "Chanteth out this Madrigal to a pleasant tune" :

We are Jolly Planters that live in the East,  
And furnisht the World with delights when they Feast.  
For by our Endeavours this Country consumes :  
Our trading is whirl'd  
All over the World  
In vast Voyages, on the Ocean so curl'd ;  
France, Spain, Holland, England, have sent men to know  
Where Jewels are found ; and how Spices do grow ;  
Where Voyagers with a small stock have been made,  
By the Wealthy returns of an East India Trade.

From torments of troubles of Body or Mind,  
Your Bonny Brisk Planters are Free as the wind.  
We eat well to labour, and labour to eat,  
Our planting doth get us both Stomach and Meat ;  
There's no betther Physic  
To vanquisht the Phthisic  
And when we'er at Leisure our Voices are Music :  
And now we are come with brisk drolling Ditty  
To honour my Lord ; and to humour the City ;  
We sing, dance, and trip it, as frolick as Ranters ;  
Such are the Sweet lives of your bonny brave Planters.

Our weighty Endeavours have Drams of Delight,  
We slave it all day but we sleep well at night ;

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Let us but to obtain a kind hour to be merry,  
Our Digging and Delving will ne'er make us weary.  
And when we do prate  
In reason of State,  
What's wanting in Wit will be made up in weight ;  
They'l currently pass, I do simply suppose,  
At them no wise man will take pepper i' th' nose.  
No Vaunters, or Fawnters, or Canters, or Ranters,  
Do lead such a life as the bonny brave Planters.

Of Cinnamon, Nutmegs, of Mace, and of Cloves,  
We have so much plenty they grow in whole Groves,  
Which yield such a savour when Sol's beams do bless 'em  
That 'ts a sweet kind of contentment to dress 'em.  
Our Sugar and Gums,  
Our Spices and Plums,  
Are better than Battels of Bullets and Drums ;  
From Wars and Batta' ia's we have such release  
We lie down in quiet and rise up in peace.  
We sing it, and dance it, we jig it, and skip it,  
Whilst our Indian Lasses do gingerly trip it.

This “brisk” song concluded, the procession passes on to the Guildhall, and everybody repairs to dinner in his order. Finally, the feasting being done, his lordship, attended by a retinue of his own Company, takes coach and is conducted to Grocers’ Hall.

## CHAPTER XIV

### GROCERS AND EDUCATION

ANOTHER respect in which the period we have reached is remarkable, and especially from the grocery trade's point of view, was the attention then given to education. It was the period when England felt the growing force of the revival of letters which had been heralded by the discoveries and inventions of the fifteenth century.

Even quite early in the fifteenth century symptoms of the coming intellectual ferment were showing themselves, and already the ground was in existence and ready to receive the seed. Thus the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were in being and flourishing. Certain great public schools, still part of the glory of our land, such as Eton and Winchester, were also seats of learning. The monasteries scattered up and down the country, and crowding one upon another in London and other cities, often had schools for youth connected with them at which free instruction in such learning as was then in vogue was dispensed. It was felt, however, as early as 1456 that the educational

## THE GROCERY TRADE

facilities of the day were insufficient. In that year four clergymen petitioned Parliament, alleging the lack at that time of grammar schools, and praying leave to be allowed each to found a school, "to teach all that will come." The petitioners complained of teaching being a monopoly. The prayer of the petitioners having been regularly granted, a grammar school was founded accordingly, which became connected with the Mercers' Company, and bore its name.

But it was in the sixteenth century that the zeal for education reached high-water mark, as proved by the enormous number of foundations, reaching from one end of the country to the other, which were made at that period. The leading reformers were not slow to advocate the extension of the work, as the records they have left abundantly testify. For instance, Latimer, in his well-known "Sermon of the Plough," preached in 1548, says: "Why are not the noblemen and young gentlemen of England so brought up in knowledge of God and in learning that they may be able to execute offices in the commonwealth? . . . If the nobility be well trained in godly learning the people would follow the same train, for truly such as the noblemen be such will the people be. Therefore for the love of God appoint teachers and schoolmasters, you that have charge of youth, and give the teachers stipends worthy their pains."

In this work of providing places of learning and  
178

## GROCERS AND EDUCATION

the means whereby it might be pursued eminent grocers and citizens of London were not slow to take their share. Thus in 1550 a merchant and members of the Skinners' Company, Sir Andrew Judd, founded Tonbridge School. By his will certain lands and houses were devised "for the perpetual maintainance of this school." Tonbridge School still flourishes, its governor being the Master Warden and Court of the Skinners' Company, and its pupils numbering 400. About the same time Bedford Grammar School was founded by Sir William Harper, an alderman of London, who conveyed thirteen acres of land for its maintenance. This school is at present in a most efficient state, with upwards of 900 boys in regular attendance. So, in 1571, Harrow was founded by John Lyon, spinner; and, in 1597, Gresham College by Sir Thomas Gresham, mercer, We have already seen that the example of public spirit and munificence among grocers had already been set somewhat earlier by the good Sir William Sevenoke, who, in conjunction with the almshouses for twenty poor people which he set up at Sevenoaks, Kent, built a free school for the education of youth within that town, and endowed it with sufficient to ensure its proper maintenance.

In 1553 Mr. Richard Beckenham, a London grocer, founded in Guildford a free grammar school for thirty of the poorest men's sons of that town, so that they might learn to read and write

## THE GROCERY TRADE

English and cast accounts perfectly, that thereby they might be fitted to become apprentices. This foundation, due to the munificence and public spirit of a grocer of London, was not long in showing its value, for one of its early scholars was George Abbot, the son of a cloth-maker (born 1562), who afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury. Whether his youngest brother, Maurice Abbot, who was one of the first directors of the East India Company, and in his time Lord Mayor of London and M.P., also received the benefit of an early education at the Grocers' foundation at Guildford I cannot say; but it is possible enough. So, again, in the case of Sir William Laxton, mentioned by Fuller in his "Worthies." Sir William was "bred a grocer in London, where he so prospered by his painful endeavours that he was chosen Lord Mayor 1544." He munificently founded an almshouse and free school at Oundle, in Northamptonshire. To ensure his foundations being properly worked after his death, he entrusted the devised land for its maintenance to the Grocers' Company, with directions that a schoolmaster and an usher should be employed. The former was to be paid £18 and the latter £6 13s. 4d. per annum. At the death of the founder his lands so devised were worth £50 a year. The gross value in 1884 had increased to £4000. It may be noted that in that year the Grocers' Company fulfilled their trust by expending upwards of £3000 per year on

## GROCERS AND EDUCATION

the school, and had then lately improved the school buildings and appurtenances at an expenditure of £28,000. It is the habit of members of the Court of the Grocers' Company to make periodical visits to Sir William Laxton's foundation at the quiet old town of Oundle, to see that the pious founder's intention is being strictly carried out.

But the most illustrious example of zeal for education manifested by a grocer is in the case of the world-famous school at Rugby, which, having gone through many vicissitudes, was raised to a pinnacle of eminence and prosperity by the labours and influence of the celebrated Dr. Arnold—a fact immortalised in that delightful classic “Tom Brown's Schooldays.” The pious founder of Rugby School was Lawrence Sheriff, a native of Rugby and a successful London grocer.

He was apprenticed to one William Walcot, grocer, in London, about 1534, and was admitted in due time (1541) to the freedom of the Grocers' Company.

That he became a tradesman of some eminence is certain, since, we find him in 1551 Purveyor to the Princess Elizabeth, and later residing at the “King's Grocer's House,” in Newgate, the rental of which was £6 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum.

There is some curious light on this subject in Fox's “Book of Martyrs,” wherein an incident is related which exhibits the good grocer of London as a man of honesty, loyal principles, and of con-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

siderable courage in maintaining them, for he showed himself actively faithful to a mistress at a time when he might have reaped suffering and loss for his pains. The conspiracy of Wyatt had then recently been unmasked, and Elizabeth in the lifetime of her sister, Queen Mary, could not have been either very comfortable or very secure. Lawrence Sheriff, who is spoken of as being "a servant of the lady (afterwards Queen) Elizabeth and sworn unto her Grace," happened to look into the Rose Tavern one morning for his cup of ale, and there met one Farrer, a haberdasher, whom Fox declares to have been a pretty regular frequenter of that hostelry. Farrer, "being in his full cups," and not having consideration for those present, began to talk at random, and allowed himself to speak despitefully of the Lady Elizabeth, saying that "Jill had been one of the chief doers of this rebellion of Wyatt's, and before all be done, she, and all the hereticks her partakers, shall well understand it. Some of those hope that she shall have the crown; but she, and they I hope, shall hop headless, or be fried with faggots, before she come to it." Sheriff did not relish this at all, and, like a brave man, turned on the speaker, and, owning himself to be her Grace's servant, valiantly took her part, alleging that she was a king's daughter, and that it ill became a knave like Farrer opprobriously to call her a "Jill." Sheriff did not let the matter end there, for shortly afterwards he resolved to complain

## GROCERS AND EDUCATION

to the Commissioners, whose chairman was the notorious Bishop Bonner, of the conduct of Farrer, although he probably knew that his plaint would not meet with much sympathy in that quarter, made as it was on behalf of one reputed a heretic. In fact, when they had heard his complaint the Commissioners endeavoured to minimise the conduct of Farrer, the Bishop saying that probably Sheriff had taken the matter too seriously, and another commissioner also taking the part of the accused. However, Sheriff told them that the Lady Elizabeth was his mistress, and he related an incident which occurred when he was about the Court the day before, when he saw Cardinal Pole, and even King Philip himself, do obeisance to her. At this the Bishop intimated that they did not intend to take Farrer's offence too seriously, for they thought that perhaps it was his fear that should Elizabeth come to the throne it might cause an alteration in religion which had prompted him to speak hastily. They would send for the delinquent and administer a reprimand. And with that Sheriff was probably satisfied, having vindicated the honour of his mistress and purged his own honourable conscience.

Shortly afterwards the Lady Elizabeth ascended the throne, and the year following we find Sheriff rewarded for his loyalty by the grant of a coat of arms, and it is significant that they contained griffins' heads (an idea evidently copied from

## THE GROCERY TRADE

the arms of the Grocers' Company), and a bunch of dates, emblematical of his calling as a grocer.

It is evident that he was a friend at Court, for we find gifts being exchanged between Queen Elizabeth and himself. In 1562 Sheriff makes the queen a New Year's gift of a "Sugar loaf, a box of ginger, a box of nutmegs, and a lb of cinnamon," and the queen in return gives him one gilt salt cover weighing 7 ounces.

In his position as Queen's Grocer he was now doing a prosperous trade, and we find him buying property in Rugby, his native town, and building thereon what he termed a "Mansion House," wherein he spent part of his time till his death, five years later. He greatly prospered, and at the time of his death he could make some very munificent bequests in his will. His funeral ceremonies were to be carried out principally in London, but afterwards his body was to be buried in the Church of St. Andrew, in Rugby. A learned divine was to preach a sermon, and £10 was to be distributed to the poor of Rugby on the day of the funeral. He left to the Grocers' Company the sum of £13 6s. 8d., one-half of this to be spent on "a recreation" of the Company.

It is as founder of the great school at Rugby that this worthy grocer comes down to fame. By his last will Lawrence Sheriff bequeathed a third of his Middlesex estate to found in his native town of Rugby a fair and convenient school-house, and to maintain therein an honest, discreet, and learned

## GROCERS AND EDUCATION

man to teach grammar. It is interesting to note that the property alluded to afterwards consisted of the site of a number of the streets near the fountain then called Conduit Mead, from which the present Lamb's Conduit Street gets its name. The rent of this property amounted to £8 at the time of the bequest ; in 1669 the rent was £20 per annum ; in 1686 it was leased for £50 ; in 1702 the lease was renewed for forty-three years at £60. In 1780 it had risen to £116 17s. 6d., and in 1825 the increment had swelled the rent to no less than £5500, a fact which would truly have astonished the donor could he have foreseen it. Needless to say, the famous school still exists and flourishes, with ten or twelve entrance scholarships of £100 to £20 awarded annually, and a muster roll of nearly six hundred scholars. Many men of eminence in all branches of service to the nation have received part of their early training within its walls, a fact alluded to so recently as on July 3, 1909, by his Majesty King Edward VII., who on that day paid a visit to the school there to open a new speech-room. Replying to the school address, the King spoke of the school as having been the scene of the labours of Arnold, and of Temple (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), and that of the schooldays of Landor, Clough, and Matthew Arnold, as of many others who have won distinction in statesmanship, in battle, in law, and in every other field of human activity.

It is noteworthy that the new speech-room is

## THE GROCERY TRADE

enriched with a memorial window of painted glass, in which the old-world figure of Lawrence Sheriff, the pious founder, appears as a perpetual reminder of the munificence of this worthy citizen and grocer.

Yet how many aspiring sons of grocers have been assisted by the rich endowment to a place at Rugby and the opportunity of profiting by the provision made by a grocer in the ages long past? It is to be feared the number is very few, for this foundation, like so many others, has been practically monopolised by one class to the exclusion of others—a fate certainly not contemplated by the founder.

Tracing the history of the trade, a little later we find a provincial grocer taking part in this useful work of founding seats of learning and education. Edward Owner, a grocer of Yarmouth, born in 1576, was in his time a notable citizen of that East-Coast seaport for that and many other reasons. He must have stood head and shoulders above his fellow townsmen by reason of his understanding and activities, as his record testifies. He was returned as M.P. for Yarmouth in 1620, and sat until 1625, and again in 1639. During the Long Parliament he had Miles Corbett as his colleague in the representation of the town. In 1625, and again in 1634, he was High Bailiff. He distinguished himself by warmly taking side from the first with the Puritan party. He opposed the levying of ship-money and was among those who voted it

## GROCERS AND EDUCATION

illegal. When the Civil War broke out he actively exerted himself in the defence of the town, and contributed both in money and plate to that object. He showed a rare public spirit in labouring for the social good of his fellow citizens, and it was mainly through his exertions that the Children's Hospital School was established, he himself contributing £1500 to its endowment. Owner died in 1650, and was buried in Great St. Nicholas Church, whence, however, one regrets to learn that his bones were removed and dispersed at a later day to make room for another occupant of the resting-place.

Other schools founded by grocers in the seventeenth century include Appleby Grammar School, founded by Sir John Moore, Witney Grammar School, founded by Richard Box, citizen and grocer of London, and Colwall School, Herefordshire, founded by Humphrey Walwyn, another London grocer. The two latter schools are governed by the Worshipful Company of Grocers.

In a subsequent chapter it will be my pleasant task to show how the good example set in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as regards education for the trade has been followed in recent times. But before taking leave of the Elizabethan age altogether it is high time to say something of another development of those "spacious days," fraught with even greater consequences—the story of how the grocery trade has contributed to the expansion of the British Empire.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

IT has often been said by politicians the “Trade follows the Flag.” The history of the grocery trade furnishes a good deal of evidence supporting the converse maxim that “The Flag follows trade.” Empire has dogged the steps of traders, and it might fairly be said that the Empire itself has to a large extent been discovered by pioneering navigators seeking groceries for grocers !

The Levant and East India Companies, for instance, and the many voyages of exploration that from time to time have been undertaken to discover new routes to India and the East for the sake of the trade in fruits and spices—what a vast influence have these had on the course of the world’s history ! If, then, we find Professor Thorold Rogers startling us, as he repeatedly does, with the assertion that there are few objects on which more blood has been spilt than on the exclusive right to sell *cloves*, the grocer may fairly plead that his trade is not to be held accountable for excesses committed in its name, and that, moreover, there is a good deal to be set to the other side of the account.

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

Take, for instance, the remark of Ravenhill, the official historian of the Worshipful Company of Grocers in 1689. “They”—the grocers—says he, “have been the most universal Merchants that traded abroad . . . and indeed this City and Nation”—that is, London and the English—“do in a great measure owe the improvement of navigation to Merchants originally exercising their mystery, as trading into all foreign parts from whence we have received either spices, drugs, fruits, gums, or other rich aromatic commodities.”

Obviously, trade *must* have a civilising influence, and it is just because the grocer handles the necessaries of life that his trade has from the very earliest times been associated with the development of civilisation. Salt, pepper, spices, dried fruits, sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa—all these have had, through trade, an immense bearing upon the progress of mankind and the opening up of the world.

The salt trade, we may be sure, has had its share in contributing to the spread of the British Empire in Africa, just as other of the commodities handled by the grocer have helped the Empire’s growth in Asia and America.

Pepper had a great deal to do with the acquirement of the British Empire of India, and, with other groceries, was the magnet which drew British traders—and after them the British flag—into the New World, as well as the remotest parts of the Old. Pepper from the Malabar Coast of India

## THE GROCERY TRADE

was used by the cooks of ancient Rome, who gave as much as ten shillings a pound for it. The spices of India have been renowned since the earliest times. It was the Indian trade, largely in spices, that caused the founding of such cities as Alexandria, Bussora, and Bagdad ; that gave flourishing commerce to Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, and other successive Powers of the Mediterranean ; and that after them enriched the Genoese and Venetian merchants and navigators. Then when the Turks invaded Europe—they were half-way over France before they were checked—and blocked up the ancient overland routes by which Indian spices had found their way, adventurous sailors at once began the search for new routes to India by sea. This was what led the Portuguese to sail south round Africa, and so discover the Cape and Natal ; the Spaniards to fare west till they discovered America ; and Bristolians to go north-west till they reached Newfoundland—the dates of the great discoveries being the New World, by Columbus, 1492 ; Newfoundland, by Cabot, from Bristol, 1496 ; the Cape, by Vasco da Gama, 1497.

All were seeking India, and even Columbus believed he had found it. Economists have pointed out that the perennial “Eastern Question” is simply the expression of the rivalry for the great commerce of the East, centring in India. “Whether at Constantinople and Cairo, or Can-

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

dahar and Cabul, or in China," writes Sir George Birdwood, "it is simply the question of how to obtain the control of the trade, navigation, and commerce of the Indian Ocean, for the purpose of exchanging on the most favoured terms the manufactures of Europe against the spices, perfumes, dyes, tans, oils and oil seeds, fibres, drugs, cereal and pulse grains, and woods and tropical productions of India, Farther India, the Indian Archipelago, and China and East Africa." But when we add to the spices, oils and oil seeds cereal and pulse grains and other tropical productions above enumerated, the Eastern staples of tea, coffee, cocoa, dates, and a few others, we find ourselves picturing what is not only in a pre-eminent degree British trade, but the British grocers' trade!

The British Empire in the East arose primarily from the efforts of the British grocers to supply their customers with pepper, cloves, and nutmegs at reasonable prices at a time when Dutch merchants were trying to extort unreasonable prices by the unwholesome power of monopoly. In the early days referred to previously in this volume, when London grocers were commonly called pepperers, what little trade we did was mainly with the Baltic, the Flemings, and the South of France. In the North the Hanseatic League was the great trading body. Spices and foreign fruits were chiefly purchased at Bruges, whilst salt and

## THE GROCERY TRADE

wine were important articles in the French trade. Bagdad was then the great dépôt of Indian produce in the East. Thence it came overland to Alexandria, where the spices and other goods were exchanged for European produce, chiefly metals. But in those times British traders never thought of penetrating to the Mediterranean—we were supplied by the Flemings and the Venetians. As time went on we find the London Grocers' Company doing business side by side with the merchants of the Hanseatic League on Thames wharves. Professor Rogers says the earliest specimen he could find of paper made from linen rags was a fourteenth-century bill for spices, no doubt bought at the London shop of some Bruges merchant. Of so little account in the world was English sea-power in the fifteenth century that Pope Alexander VI. (Borgia) in 1493, being asked to settle the map, drew a line from pole to pole through the middle of the Atlantic and the southern continent of the New World, and calmly bestowed all the countries that should be discovered west of that line on the King of Spain, and all those east of it on the King of Portugal.

The establishment of the Levant Company in 1581, enabling Eastern products to be imported direct instead of through Venice as hitherto, had immediate consequences upon the grocery trade. This Company, according to Ravenhill, was one of the offsprings of the Grocers' Company, and the

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

commodities imported from the East through its enterprising members, which included dates, currants, figs, raisins, were now able to be sold at greatly reduced prices. Not that these imports were easily acquired, for many of the vessels had to fight their way homewards, attacked by Barbary corsairs or Spanish trade rivals. One such engagement took place in the Strait of Gibraltar in 1590, when ten of the Company's ships encountered twelve Spanish galleys, and, after a stiff fight of six hours, finally put them to rout. These embarrassing miniature naval engagements eventually led the Company in 1593, when the charter was renewed, to provide for the equipment of four vessels with ordnance and ammunition and two hundred English mariners.

An interesting document illustrating the methods of the Company during the reign of Charles I. has come into my possession. It deals with the importation and sale of currants, and is signed by William Burgess, secretary. It runs as follows:

“The Levant Company at a generall Court held the tenth day of March, 1637, taking into consideration the regulating of the Trade of Currans, which of late is fallen into great disorder, by reason of the many Buyers; the great and excessive prices given there for the same; the ill-curing, untimely flivening, and lading home thereof: Did thereupon resolve for the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

time to come, to have but one sole Buyer of all the Currans of the Islands of Zant and Cephlonia, who is to reside as Agent and Principal Factor for the Company of English Merchants trading the Levant Seas, and into those Islands, and to remove from one to the other, as the business shall require: And to that purpose did make choice of Master THOMAS SYMONDS, Merchant, a Member of the said Company for that Employment who hath Commission and Instructions from the Company for his proceedings therein, according to severall Orders in that behalf made.

“ 1. The said Principall Factor is, by order of the Company, and with his owne consent, to take and receive to his owne use for his maintenance and recompense for his paines to be taken in the Employment three quarters of a Doller per Tun upon all the Currans that shall be shipped from thence for account of any the Members of the said Company, during the time of his said Employment there.

“ 2. For the Price of the Currans of each Island, the Company have resolved not to exceed these prices following, viz.:—For the Zant Currans 22. Dollers per thousand grosse weight of Venice from August till Christmas ; and 20. Dollers from Christmas till August following. And for the Currans of Cephalonia 20. Dollers for the like Weight, from August till Christmas, and 18.

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

Dollers from Christmas till August following: These prices to continue so long as the Company shall think fit.

“3. For the time of Lading it is ordered as followeth, viz.:—That for the ensuing years, no shippe or ships should come into Port at the Islands of Zant and Cephalonia, to lade Currans, till the first of December next: And the Company have at a generall Court ordered a penalty of twenty Nobles per Tun to be levied upon all that shall transgress, either in price, time of Lading, buying without his consent first had, and not paying the said three quarters of a Dollar per Tunne, &c.

“4. For the better effecting of the business, and finding no other way to accomplish it, the Company did resolve to stint each Member of their Society to a certain quantity of Currans yearly, respecting their antiquity in the freedome, and former trading in that Commodity: Which being referred to a Court of Assistants, was agreed on, and settled accordingly, as by a particular Schedule of the several Names and Stints remaining with the Husband of the Company, more at large dothe appear.

“5. All the Currans that shall be bought yearly at both the Islands, shall by the said Principall Factor be equally and indifferently distributed to the Factors there, for account of their Principalls, according to their several

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Stints mentioned in the Schedule, as is aforesaid.

“6. And for preventing the abuse that might happen by transferring of Stints, it is at a generall Court holden the fourteenth of Aprill, 1638, ordered, That no man shall transferre, lend or sell his Stint to any other directly or indirectly, upon penalty of treble Impositions to be levied and placed to each Parties account, that shall lade or bring in more than his said Stint.

“Lastly, These Articles were agreed upon and confirmed by the said Levant Company, in a Generall Court, the XXIXth day of Aprill last 1639, and all the Members of the said Company stinted accordingly by a Committy thereunto appointed for this ensuing yeare, as doth appeare by the Schedule remaining in the hands of the said Husband Captaine LOD. ROBERTS. At which time it was also Ordered by the Company aforesaid, that what Servant or Factor soever belonging to any the member of the said Company now employed, or hereafter to be employed, within the said Islands, should violate or transgress the afore-mentioned Orders, either directly in his own person, or indirectly by any other his means or procurement; or should contemptuously behave himself against the said Company, their Agent or Assignes, and these fore-named Orders, should be for ever batulated

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

from the further imployment of any the members of the said Company, and be thereby made incapable of his freedome of the said Society hereafter : and if formerly free shall be disfranchised."

In the charter ratified in 1675 a singular clause provided that "two ship loads of figs and currants are annually allowed to be exported . . . for the use of the King of Great Britain's kitchen, provided there be no scarcity of these fruits, paying only 3 per cent. custom for the same."

Thus we may see how history repeats itself. The Levant Company, in its policy of appointing "but one sole buyer of all the Currans of the Islands of Zant and Cephalonia," as long ago as 1639 was but instituting the same policy of monopolistic concentration which commended itself to the Greek Government nearly three centuries afterwards! Students of orthography may note with interest this early spelling of the word "Currans." There is of late a tendency to speak, in some newspapers, of "grocer's currants," as though the grocer's currants needed a distinguishing epithet. As a matter of fact, the grocer's currants are the original possessors of the name, since it was derived from "Corinth," so that whether they are or are not "really grapes" they have a perfect right to their name.

The discovery of the Cape route to India had also many important bearings upon the

## THE GROCERY TRADE

grocery trade. The Portuguese, bringing the spices by sea, were enabled to undersell the Venetians, whose trade was by the more expensive overland route, and Lisbon soon displaced Venice as the great resort of traders. The Turkish invasion, too, ruined the overland trade, and destroyed Alexandria as a business centre. As a consequence we find Portuguese and Flemish merchants carrying their goods to the great intermediate market of Antwerp, and that city opening up to great wealth and influence through the spice trade. Guicciardini, who wrote in the early part of the sixteenth century, calculates that the value of the spices brought to Antwerp from Lisbon exceeded a million crowns yearly. Thus the Portuguese and the Flemings prospered; and at the same time we find the Spaniards prospering by a monopoly of the West Indian trade, mainly in sugar, ginger, and cotton.

Next came the turn of the Dutch. An enterprising and successful people, the Dutch made their Bank of Amsterdam for a long period what the Bank of England is now to the commercial world. In 1595 they reached the East Indies by the Cape passage, and at length they managed to displace the Portuguese and get a good grip of the spice trade. It was their gripping too tight that ruined them. They put up the price of pepper from 2*s.* 8*d.* and 2*s.* 9*d.* a pound to 4*s.*, and even 8*s.* The London grocers were up in arms! They





EAST INDIA HOUSE, LEADENHALL STREET, E.C., AT THE DATE OF THE DISSOLUTION  
OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY (PULLED DOWN IN 1862)

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

determined to seek the Eastern trade for themselves, and their petitions to Queen Elizabeth led to the chartering of that great Company which laid the foundations of and largely built up the Anglo-Indian Empire.

The merchants forming the first East India Company (including such well-known grocers of the period as Paul Bayning, Sir John Moore, Oliver Style, Robert Brooke, William Barret (the King's grocer), and Thomas Middleton), received their patent of monopoly on the last day of the year 1600. The first capital of the East India Company was £72,000. Two years afterwards the Dutch formed an East India Company with a capital of 6,600,000 florins, or £550,000. The London Company, to whom the Queen granted a charter exempting them from certain duties for four years, and empowering them to put down interlopers with a heavy hand, were successful in bringing down the price of pepper to the English consumers to 2*s.* a pound and less, but they had a keen struggle with the Dutchman. Gradually, however, the English Company devoted their attention more to the mainland, displacing the Portuguese, whilst the Dutch, after founding the city of Batavia, captured Amboyna from the Spaniards, and devoted all their energies to getting possession of the five islands on which alone at that time the *clove* grew.

The clove, known in Europe from early times,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

was always in high demand. "For the monopoly of the Spice," says Rogers, "Spaniards, Dutchmen and Englishmen long contended and warred sedulously. . . . To obtain a monopoly of it for themselves, the Dutch thought no efforts and no sacrifices too great." And eventually the Dutch fleet got possession of the Moluccas and of the coveted clove monopoly. But the sequel was not to the Dutchman.

The "First Letter Book" of the East India Company contains much quaint and interesting matter relating to the Company's early years, its day of small things. The first voyage was under the command of Sir James Lancaster, who commenced what is known as the "Factory Period" in the Company's history, by establishing a trading centre at Bantam. On leaving Bantam in 1602 on his return voyage home, Sir James Lancaster wrote memoranda for the guidance of Tudd, Morgan, Towerson, and others whom he left in charge of the business. The following is a sample of his directions :

"And when God shall send you to Banda take a house or houses for your business as you shall think most fit for the Company's best profit, and make sale of your commodities, always advancing the price the best you may. In your provision you shall make in Nutmegs and Maces, have you a great care to receive such as be good,

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

for the smallest and rotten nutmegs be worth nothing at home, so that their freight and principal will be lost. Of Maces the fairest and best will be soonest sold and to best reckonings. Also be careful to get together all the Cloves you can, and use all diligence to procure some 60 or 80 tons at the least and the rest of Nutmegs and Maces."

A letter from the Company to Mr. Thomas Starkie at Bantam the following year impresses upon him to be careful that

"The Pepper, Cloves, and Nutmegs be well cleaned of dust before they be laden aboard, for the dustiness of them, besides the pestering and charging of the Ship with unprofitable dust, the commodity is disgraced by the uncleanness of it, and we are desirous that regard be had, as far as possible may be, that the Pepper be large and smooth, and that the Nutmegs be cleansed from Rumps, and that no commodity be brought from so long a voyage that shall not be clean and commend itself."

The same caution is separately impressed upon Mr. Thomas Morgan, "English Merchant Resident at Bantam." The Company's head office was always very anxious—as good grocers have ever been to this day—that the public should receive a clean and wholesome article, and to this end sent

## THE GROCERY TRADE

out skilled men to assist in the buying and first preparation of their spices. Thus David Middleton and Dymond Dickenson were sent to the Moluccas, and we read :

“ITEM further touching the Dragon, we wish you the General to use all means and dilligence to lade her with Cloves at the Molloccos, or if the whole lading of Cloves cannot be gotten, then return to Banda to furnish out the same with Nutmegs and Mace, wherein, as for all other Spices, we would have you principally to be advised by Dymond Dickenson, who hath best skill therein. And to remember to foresee, that in lading either Cloves, Nutmegs or Mace, you cleanse them what you can from dust and Rump that the Ship be not stuffed with such unprofitable ware as is not worth the Customs, and so we lose all other charge, therefore rather burne the same than lade it in the Shipps and be careful to buy dry Cloves and not such as are green.”

If the goods were not found what they ought to have been on reaching London the Company’s representative abroad did not fail to hear of it. In a letter sent to Gabriell Towerson in March 1606 we read :

“Touching the condition and quality of our spices, you shall understand first that the Pepper

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

was reasonably clean, although we lost much by your garbling there, which course notwithstanding we rather wish to be used, than to send it home dusty and uncleansed, whereby we are compelled to pay freight and Customs for garble yet desire that our spices if it be possible be so brought in, as there shall not be in cleansing thereof so great loss. Our Nutmeggs were exceeding bad, being light, not having their full ripeness, which afterwards with carrying and removing turned to dust to our great loss, as indeed not worth the bringing home besides the freight and Customs we paid for them. At which ignorance of you to buy such spices, we conceive the Indians do rejoice, but if ye shall be enforced to take such spice, or none at all, you are as near as you can to make the price thereafter."

In other instances we have the Company giving minute directions to ensure the cleanliness of the ships' holds, the matting of the hatchways, &c., to prevent contamination of the cargo. They were strictly charged

"That noe liquor be spilt in the ballast of the Shipps or filthiness be left within bourde which in heate breedeth Noysome smells, and infeccion, but that there be a diligent care to keep the over-lopps [lowest deck] and other places of the Shipps cleane and sweete, which is

## THE GROCERY TRADE

a notable presenacion of health, wherein the Dutchmen doe farr exceede us in cleanliness to their great commendacions and disgrace to our People."

Nor were the merchants the only persons who in those early days of our foreign trade displayed shrewdness and foresight. Queen Elizabeth was asked to allow Spanish money to be sent to the East for the purposes of trade, on the ground that her own silver coins and stamp were not known there. Whereupon, instead of acceding to the request or insisting that the English coinage of that day should be used, the queen issued special money, "of a kind unknown to the British Mint either before or since her time," intended for the use of the East India Company only. This money, which bore on the one side the queen's arms and on the other a portcullis, was made to match in weight the Spanish piastre, and its half, quarter, and half-quarter—afterwards called a crown, half-crown, shilling, and sixpence. The queen said it was her fixed resolution not to permit the merchants to send to India the coin of the King of Spain or of any other foreign prince, but only such silver as had her picture on the one side and the portcullis on the other, to the end "that her name and effigies might be hereafter respected by the Asiatics, and she be known as great a Prince as the King of Spain."

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

It was not always plain sailing for the adventurous grocers, however, even when their Indian spices had been bought and brought home safely to the London warehouses. His Majesty King James I., who came to the throne the third year after the Company was chartered, claimed a large share of the pepper brought home, and when his pepper needed to be sold had a shrewd notion of how to prevent the spoiling of the market for it by unwelcome competition amongst sellers less puissant. The Calendar of State Papers (East Indies, 1513–1616) records that, in 1603, the East India Company was in consultation with the Court respecting the sale of certain pepper held by the king. The sequel to these preliminary proceedings is seen in a letter from the Lord Treasurer dated “the last of November, 1603,” which, in modernised spelling, reads :

“ After our hearty commendations, whereas there hath been already proposed by me, the Lord Treasurer, in behalf of the King’s Majesty, to you, the Governor the Company of Adventurers trading into the East Indies, these three things ensuing—first, that although His Majesty by virtue of his princely prerogative may lawfully restrain the sale of your pepper lately brought from the East Indies until his own bulk and mass of pepper now remaining at Leaden Hall be first sold and rented, as by His Majesty’s

## THE GROCERY TRADE

learned Council His Highness hath been fully resolved, yet nevertheless such is His Majesty's gracious favour and inclination towards you, having respect to your so worthy adventure made and great charges sustained in this last long voyage by you set forth, so much for the honour of His Majesty and the public good of the realm as he is pleased to forbear the using of his prerogative from this time, and to omit his own profit to give means of benefit unto you. Secondly, that there should be a joint sale of His Majesty's pepper and a like quantity of yours, and so to be altered and sold together equally and not otherwise. Thirdly, if you should thereof mislike, then you to buy His Majesty's pepper at some reasonable rate to be agreed upon. Now forasmuch as we understand that . . . you having considered the two other offers, you do with all humbleness and thankfulness embrace the second . . . these are therefore to signify unto you that His Majesty being informed of these things, is well pleased to allow of good choice, namely, of a joint sale as well of His Majesty's pepper as of yours in a proportionable quantity together. And for the better accomplishing of the same, as well for the King's benefit as your own behoof, we have thought good to recommend the whole ordering and managing of this business to your good diligence, cares, and discretions, praying and requiring you

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

to assemble yourselves together, and to consider of some such course for carriage for the same as may produce good effect of some speedy and reasonable benefit unto both ; for the furtherance of which we think it requisite, *first*, that there be an Institution general, *that no pepper should be brought into this Kingdom, by English or Stranger*, until the said pepper, proportionally agreed upon as is aforesaid to be sold, be first rented. *Secondly*, that all such pepper as is already brought in either by Stranger or English out of the Low Countries or from the Straits *should be sequestered* likewise from sale. *Thirdly*, that a present survey be made of all such pepper as you the Adventurers have already delivered or shall deliver. . . . Provided always that it may be lawful for any to transport pepper out of this realm at their pleasure. And it seemeth also most just and reasonable that *strict order be taken with the Grocers that they buy no pepper but His Majesty's and yours*, the same being wholesome and saleable pepper ; and to that end that a present survey be made of such store and quantity as the said Grocers now have upon their hands. These points we have thought fit to remember unto you. . . . So we bid you heartily farewell from the Court at Wilton the last of November 1603."

The Company's answer to their lordships' letter

## THE GROCERY TRADE

states that they have, as directed, met and conferred upon the course to be taken, and with respect to the proposed joint sale of their own and his Majesty's pepper they proceed :

“We find in the examination of that course these particular impediments following :—*First*, a great quantity of the Company's pepper already disposed into many hands by a general divident [division] agreed upon amongst themselves before your lordships' letters came to our hands, besides other great quantities of pepper brought out of the Low Countries, and both of them so passed from hand to hand from the Merchant to the Grocer and from the Grocer to the Chapman in the country, that by this means there is sufficient pepper already delivered out abroad in the City and Country to forbear any further sale for one year at the least ; so as the vent of His Majesty's pepper by a joint retailing sale with the remainder of the Company's pepper can no way advance any sum of money in convenient time to His Majesty's use, worthy the attending the event of this course. Which being so, then there resteth only the other means, which is the sale of the King's pepper to the Company, wherein we, the Committees on the said Company's behalf, do humbly inform your lordships that the said Company have upon their hands already so great a mass of pepper, that albeit every Adventurer thereof

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

hath free liberty for the bringing in of 100 pounds of money to take out 500 pounds' worth of pepper upon his stock, to set forth a new voyage to the East Indies to fetch home the remainder of their goods there, yet in regard there is no present sale thereof there is such drawing back in performance of the supply that the voyage hath not that expedition which were convenient. Whereupon we think that so many particular men of so divers condition will hardly be drawn to engage themselves for their several proportions of their Adventurers to enlarge any further sums to buy a commodity that is like to lie so long upon their hands. . . . And we the Committees for the Company do humbly advertise your lordships that if the preparation of the voyage be any way crossed by urging the generality with further supplies of charge, or hindering them in the uttering of their pepper divided and to be divided amongst them before the departing of the Fleet, which will be about the end of February, the voyage will wholly be overthrown—which may by your lordships' favour be upheld both to the benefit of the King and the good of the Commonwealth by this small toleration; and the ships being once sent away the Company will be ready in all duty to submit themselves to any course that shall seem beneficial to His Majesty for the venting of his pepper. And thus humbly waiting at your

## THE GROCERY TRADE

lordships' commandment and service we take our leave.

"London, 8th December 1603.

"Thomas Smyth, Governor.	Jo. Wolstenholme.
Wm. Rider.	Wm. Romeny.
Tho. Middleton.	Tho. Bramley, Dep.
Samu. Saltonasted.	Tho. Cordall."

This letter throws an interesting sidelight on the state of the grocery trade at the time of the first ventures of the Company. With the small population of those days, the consumption of expensive spices was necessarily very limited, and when a large cargo of pepper came in the stocks on hand went up with a bound. The policy then preferred being that of maintaining prices, rather than extending the consumption area by lowering them, as so often happens nowadays, there was no small difficulty in realising such large quantities as had to be dealt with. In the instance before us, the Company, to raise money for another voyage, had offered to every Adventurer £500 worth of pepper for £100 cash. Whether this course proved effectual in lowering stocks, and whether the Company's policy or that of King James's privy councillors was adopted in the pepper sales in which his Majesty was so keenly interested, the letter-book unfortunately omits to state. We find the king, however, subsequently assisting the Company in various ways, such as by writing letters to Eastern

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

potentates, and by granting special privileges as regards such important matters as “the garbling” of spices.

The following transcript from the East India Company's first patent for “mitigation of Statute for Garbling Spices” is interesting as giving a list of the spices and other grocery wares imported by the Company :

“James by the Grace of God King of England Scotland France and Ireland defender of the Faith, &c. To our High Treasurer and Admirable of England, and to all other Admirals, Vicadmirals, Captains and others serving upon the sea, And to all Mayors Sheriffs Constables Customers Comptrollers Surveyor Searchers, Keeper of our Ports, Creeks and Passages and to all others our Officers Ministers and Subjects whatsoever to whom in this behalf it shall or may appertain and to every of them greetings.  
WHEREAS in the first session of our Parliament holden at Westminster, in the first year of our reign of England France and Ireland and of Scotland the seven and thirtieth one Act was made intituled an Act for the well-garbling of Spices, whereby it was ordained and enacted that from and after the last day of September then next ensuing the end of that Session of Parliament, All spices Wares Drugs and other Merchandise garbleable, that is to say, Pepper,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Cloves, Mace, Nutmegs, Cinnamon, Ginger, Long-Pepper, Wormseeds, Cumminseeds, Aniseeds, Corianderseeds, Bynny Pepper, Almonds, Dates, Galls, Gums, of all sorts and kinds garbleable, Spikenard, Galingath, Turmericke, Setweth (Zedoary) Cassia fistula, Guinea pepper, Senna, Barbaries, Rice, Erius, Stavesacre, Fennugreek, Cassia, Lignum, Grains of Paradise, Carroway Seeds, and all other Spices, Drugs, Wares, and other merchandises that had been usually garbled or ought to be garbled cleansed severed sorted or divided in the City of London and the liberties thereof, should for the fees usually allowed in their behalf be sufficiently cleansed severed garbled and divided and afterwards settled [sealed] by the Garbler thereunto appointed for the time being, or his sufficient Deputy or Deputies, Servant or Servants, before that the same or any part thereof should be sold, upon pain of forfeiture of all and every such spices, Drugs, Wares or other Merchandise, or the value thereof which should be sold as by the said Act more at large appeareth. And whereas the true intent and meaning of the said Act was that none of the said Spices, Drugs, Wares and Merchandises brought into the realm should be altered or sold to the end to be used in Meats, Drinks, or other needful occasions amongst our subjects within this realm before such time as same were sufficiently cleansed severed garbled and

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

*divided* as is aforesaid. And the true meaning the same Act did not in any wise extend to the cleansing, severing, garbling, and dividing of any such of the said Spices, Drugs, Wares and Merchandises as should be transported out of this realm in such sort as they were brought into the same. And whereas it is found that by some general words that passed in the said Act no Wares, Merchandises or commodities that are garbleable being brought into this realm can be sold between Merchant and Merchant ungarbled and the intent to transport the same into the parts beyond the seas but the seller thereof by the strict letter of the said Statute shall thereby be in danger to forfeit all the said Spices, Drugs, Wares and Merchandises which he shall so sell ungarbled. And whereas our loving subjects the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the said East Indies have credibly informed us that they having lately brought from the said East Indies into this one realm a great quantity of Spice and other Wares and commodities garbleable, more than can be uttered and spent within the realm in many years, and have been therefore humble suitors to us to have our license to sell some of the same spices in gross to other Merchants to be transported in gross into divers beyond the seas, which by reason of the said Statute they make doubt to do without our special license in

## THE GROCERY TRADE

that behalf, which favour if we grant them not, and that very speedily, other Merchants of other Nations will haply prevent them in serving those places with such like spices and so theirs shall lie upon their hands to their great loss and damage. Know ye therefore that we, graciously tendering the welfare and commodity of our said loving subjects the Governor and Company of Merchants trading into the East Indies, and to the end they may be the better enabled to maintain and continue their trade and traffic in the said East Indies, of our special grace certain knowledge and mere motion have given and granted and by these presents for us our heirs and successors to give and grant full and free liberty license power and authority unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, and to their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for them and every of them hereafter to utter sell and put to sale any of the said Spices, Drugs, Wares and Merchandises or any of them already brought from any parts of the said East Indies unto this realm or any part thereof in whole packs sacks or casks unbroken ungarbled and not cleansed severed sorted or divided to any Merchants as well our natural born subjects as Aliens, denizens or Strangers that shall within the space of three months next after the date thereof transport the same in whole packs, sacks

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

or casks unbroken as aforesaid into any the parts beyond the seas without any damage loss forfeiture and penalty against the said Governor and Company. . . . Provided always nevertheless that if there shall not be from time to time and at all times hereafter sufficient quantity or store of the said Spices, Drugs, Wares, and Merchandises to be garbled, cleansed, severed, sorted and divided left and being within this our realm of England, and to be used spent and occupied by our loving subjects within the same realm in their meats drinks and other needful occasions, and the same to be sold altered and put to sale to any of our said loving subjects at reasonable and indifferent prices. That then and from thenceforth as well the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies shall cease and forbear to sell and utter any of the said Spices, Drugs, Wares, and Merchandise ungarbled as is aforesaid, as also the said Merchants and others shall cease and forbear to buy receive and take the same ungarbled, anything before in these presents to the contrary notwithstanding. . . .”

The above patent of dispensation was granted in 1606, after a petition from the Company had been referred to “the Lord Treasurer and Earle of Salisburie” and the two Lord Chief Justices. In 1616 we find King James granting further letters

## THE GROCERY TRADE

patent to extend the Company's privileges in the same respect, in which the following passage occurs :

“ That it shall and may be lawful to and for them and every person and persons being free of the said Company at all times hereafter and from time to time at their own free wills and pleasures to alter sell and put to sale such quantities, and so much of all or any sorts of Spices, Wares, and Merchandises and commodities which they shall bring and have returned in any of their voyages or ships from the said East Indies into this our said realm of England or any part thereof, as to them or any of them shall seem good, or as may most tend to the profit and benefit of them or any of them, in whole great packs, sacks, or casks ungarbled, and not cleansed, severed, sorted or divided. . . . And we further . . . do give and grant full and free liberty from license and authority unto all and every Merchant and Merchants person and persons whatsoever as well our natural born subjects as Aliens, denizens, or Strangers, and they and every or any of them shall and lawfully may bargain for, buy, receive and take of the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, and their Successors for the time being, and of all and every person and persons being free of the same Company or of any of them, any such Spices, Drugs, Wares, Merchandise and commodities in whole great packs, sacks, or

## MERCHANT TRADING COMPANIES

casks as aforesaid, before the same be garbled, cleansed, severed or divided, without any damage, loss, forfeiture or penalty . . . Paying unto us our heirs and Successors from time to time all and every such customs, subsidies, sums of money and other duties as are or ought to be answered and paid to us. . . . Provided always that if any Merchant or Merchants or other person or persons . . . shall at any time afterwards put any of the said Drugs, Wares, or Merchandises so bought as aforesaid to sale or otherwise utter the same within the realm of England or any other of our Kingdoms, Dominions or Territories, which Spices shall not be afterwards exported but sold within this our realm for inward use, that then every such person shall incur and fall into the losse penalty and forfeiture in the said recited Act contained."

The letters patent name the Governor (Sir Thomas Smith) and Committee of the Company, and exonerate them for any previous offences against the statute now covered by this permission.

A grievance which the East India Company had against King James in its early days was the issue of a licence by the king to Sir Edward Michelbourne and others, to send out ships to trade with Cathaya, China, Japan, Cambaya and Corea—illustrating how these trade ventures grew and spread in all directions. The length of the Indian voyages and their comparatively poor results, and

## THE GROCERY TRADE

the feeling of being ill-used by the Government, caused many of the Adventurers to lose heart in the early years; but those who persisted were rewarded and encouraged in 1611 by a cargo of nutmegs and mace so valuable as to produce a dividend of 211 per cent. A single ship which left Gravesend in 1611 and returned in 1615 produced 218 per cent. upon the capital invested; and the eleventh voyage, in twenty months, yielded no less than 340 per cent. Pepper costing in India  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  per lb. was sold in England at 1s. 8d.; cloves costing 9d. were sold at 5s.; nutmegs costing 4d. were sold at 3s.; whilst Mace costing 8d. per lb. was sold at 6s. per lb.

By the year 1620 the Company possessed factories in Sumatra, the Mogul's dominions, Japan, Java, Borneo, Banda, Malacca, Celebes, Siam, Coromandel, and Malabar. In this way trade spread its empire in the East, whilst in the West the Company had at least made the effort to extend it by sending out Knight in the *Hopewell* in search of the North-West Passage.

This preliminary period of quiet but enterprising business in the spice trade lasted until 1623, when the massacre of the Company's agents at Amboyna brought its operations into prominent public notice, with the result that a general desire sprang up to share in its prosperous trading. Thus rival ventures came to be fitted out, as we shall have occasion to see in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GROCERS AND THE APOTHECARIES

THE century we have reached with the chronicle of the East India Company was one in which the making of modern England went on apace. Half-way through that hundred years came the Civil War, with the temporary overthrow of the monarchy. Then when the Stuart dynasty was restored and peace again assured came a new expansion of trade, which has never since for any long period ceased to grow.

In particular the seventeenth century brought with it many hours of storm and stress for the old City companies in general, and, what is mostly our concern, for the Grocers' Company. It is remarkable for the number of times the Company's charters were renewed, and for the branching out from the Grocers of another company or society which has flourished to the present day.

In 1607 James I. granted to the Grocers' Company a renewal of their charter. This, as an inspection of the ancient copy still in the Company's possession serves to show, included a renewal or

## THE GROCERY TRADE

confirmation of their ancient privileges and powers in relation to the sale of goods, *including drugs*, which up till then had been exercised and possessed by them, and the plenary control of members of the undivided community. Apparently no idea was entertained that in a few short years a dissolution of the bond which existed between the Grocers and another branch of their fraternity would come about. As a matter of fact, the grant of this date was the last under which the ancient Company would retain jurisdiction over pharmacy. In the agitation which followed, and which resulted in the Apothecaries forming a separate society, they had the manifest advantage of having the king himself on their side. It was not done, however, without a very vigorous protest from the Grocers, who were loth to part with the privileges they had so long enjoyed.

Events had not been wanting to justify the Crown in its action. During the reign of Elizabeth many complaints had been made against the incompetence of apothecaries—then, of course, under the jurisdiction of the Grocers' Company—and so far back as 1562 the Physicians sought to obtain powers through Parliament to transfer the correction and oversight of the Apothecaries from the Grocers to themselves.

This action of the Physicians led the Grocers' Company to increase its activity in the detection of bad and unwholesome wares sold by apothecaries, and in May 1562 there were “burnt and consumed

## THE GROCERS AND APOTHECARIES

by fire in the parlour of this house," sundry wares seized by the Wardens, including rhubarb, worm-seed, manna, and other "noughtye" and corrupt drugs and wares, the said apothecaries being "straightly charged and commanded so to use themselves hereafter that they be no more found faulty in the having or selling of any corrupt drugs or wares."

The abuses, however, continued, and in 1587 the Court of the Company resolved that

"for reformation of sundry and many abuses amongst the apothecaries, brothers of the Company, it is ordered and agreed that, Mr. Warden's calling unto them such and so many of the apothecaries as they shall think convenient from time to time, thrice at the least every year, viz., once at the spring and once at the fall, and at other times when Mr. Wardens shall think meet and convenient, shall search the apothecaries for compounds and other matters according to the ordinances."

Whether as a result of this increased vigilance of the Grocers' Wardens or because the Grocers' Company could not adequately cope with the growing abuses of the Apothecaries, an agitation among the latter for a separate society broke out early in the seventeenth century, one of the prime movers being Gideon de Lawne, "a stranger born," who resided in Blackfriars; and a Parliamentary measure was framed in 1610 definitely providing for the creation of a separate corporation of apothe-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

caries. This attempt to weaken the Company of Grocers met with strong opposition, and for the moment with little success. In 1614, however, the agitation was renewed, and a petition was presented to King James which set out that of late years

“many imperfect and unskilful persons do make and sell, without restraint, false and corrupt medicines in and about London, and do likewise send them throughout your Highness’ Kingdoms to the disgrace and prejudice of the noble science of physic and of the learned physicians and of such as are skilful in the art of apothecaries, and to the imminent danger of your subjects healths and lives which abuses by your said subjects remaining one body politic with the Company of Grocers, hath not hitherto nor cannot receive any due reformation, your said subjects having no place of authority amongst them nor they having any skill in the said science nor power to reform the abuses and wrongs thereof.”

The petitioners thereupon besought the king to incorporate them as a separate body.

The king referred the matter to the Attorney-General (Sir Francis Bacon) and the Solicitor-General (Sir Henry Yelverton), with instructions to confer with his Majesty’s Physicians and the Apothecaries upon the matter. The judges thereupon wrote to the Grocers’ Company as follows :

## THE GROCERS AND APOTHECARIES

“To the Mr. and Wardens of the Company of Grocers in London.

“It hath pleased his Majesty to refer unto us the examination of disorders complained of by the Physicians and Apothecaries. And if we find the redress thereof to be by way of incorporating of them to certify the same to his Majesty. And for so much as we conceive this new incorporation may concern your Company being an ancient Company already established we have thought it fit before any further proceeding be had in this business to give you hearing and to that purpose we will that you attend us at mine the King’s Attorney’s Chamber in Grays Inn upon Wednesday next by two of the Clock in the afternoon.

“Your very loving friends,

“FRANCIS BACON.

“HENRY YELVERTON.”

The Company thereupon appointed the Wardens and certain apothecaries, being members of the Company, to attend and give evidence as requested, representing that the incorporation was unnecessary and likely to be prejudicial to their ancient Company.

Gideon de Lawne, however, had not remained inactive, and he continued to support the agitation in influential circles, his appointment about 1615 as apothecary to the king giving him additional power at Court.

The removal from office of Baron Ellesmere in

## THE GROCERY TRADE

1616, who as Lord Keeper had jealously examined all applications for new incorporation, and the election of Bacon in his stead, no doubt favoured the suit of the Apothecaries, and James was eventually convinced that a separate incorporation of the Apothecaries was desirable, and a charter was accordingly granted them on December 6, 1617.

The Apothecaries' Company's charter had a negative and a positive side. Whilst on the one hand it restrained members of the Grocers' and all other companies from keeping apothecaries' shops, and from exercising the "mystery" in London or within a radius of seven miles, it required every practitioner to have served his full term of apprenticeship, and to have obtained from the College of Physicians a certificate as to his competence. It also conferred on the society powers of search, seizure, and supervision over apothecaries' shops in London and within the aforesaid radius, a privilege hitherto held by the Grocers' Company. The new body was also empowered to buy, sell, and make drugs—a function which, it is said, they found at first some difficulty in performing, owing to the want of corporate resources and the expensive character of the materials. Later, it is said, the apothecaries not only dealt in their own proper material, but, under pretence of selling liqueurs for medicinal purposes, laid in stocks of the richer sorts of wines—Stowe specifies more particularly muscadel, Malmsey, sack, and bastard—thus tres-

## THE GROCERS AND APOTHECARIES

passing upon the province and injuring the rights of the Vintners.

The new society was fortunate in having James for a friend. He would even call it “his” society ; and in the grant of arms made to them the Apothecaries symbolised their obligations to the king by having two unicorns introduced, the dexter one denoting Scotland, James’s native land.

The foundation of the Apothecaries’ Company was resented by the Grocers and the City authorities, and both these bodies were to receive a sharp rap over the knuckles in quite the Stuart manner for their pains. To the temper James perceived in the Grocers he replies :

“Another grievance of mine is that you have condemned the patents of the Apothecaries in London. I myself did devise that Corporation, and do allow it. The Grocers who complain of it are but Merchants. The mystery of these Apothecaries was belonging to the Apothecaries, wherein the Grocers are unskilful ; and therefore I think it fitting that they should be a Corporation of themselves. They (the Grocers) bring home rotten wares from the Indies, Persia, and Greece, and herewith through mixtures make waters and sell such as belong to the Apothecaries, and think no man must control them, because they are not Apothecaries.”

To the Lord Mayor and Aldermen the following

## THE GROCERY TRADE

letter was despatched by the king in 1618 on the same subject :

“ Whereas for the Reformacon of the manifold abuses committed dayly by unskilful persons, professing and practising the Art of Apothecaries in London Wee were lately pleased upon deliberation and long advisement first taken, in a Cause of that weight, tending soe much to the Publique good and safety of our subjectes by a late Chre to separate the Apothecaries of London from the Company of Grocers to whome they were formerly united, And to create the Apothecaries into a distinct body by themselves Inhabling them to the sole practice of their owne Arte which had beene of late tymes promiscuously used by Grocers and other Emperickes. And whereas thes Princely care of oures, seemeth now to be by you impugned as of late wee have bin informed, in that you have refused to enroll our said Chre offered to you and not to admitt their Apprentices as Apothecaries into the freedome of the Cittie, Wee let you weet that our pleasure is, That this Company of Apothecaries created by us, shal bee as free and absolute in all Respects as any other Corporacon in London, And doe therefore require your due conformitie, and obedience to us herein, and in whatsoever ells shall concerne them And that you so provide by all good wayes and means, that

## THE GROCERS AND APOTHECARIES

they may bee fourthwith settled and established in the free practice of their goverment and trade. And that they maie without ympeachment freely use and enioye such granntes and privileges as wee in grace to them and good respect to our subiectes have thus conferred upon them And hereof faile you not as you tender our displeasure.

“Given under our signett at Whitehall the XJth day of Aprill 1618.”

The royal will and pleasure, or rather displeasure, thus manifested was further emphasised by a proclamation of August 4, 1621, commanding that none should sell, compound, or make any medicinal receipts, or sell or distil to sell any oils, waters,<sup>”</sup> or other extracts in London or within seven miles, but apothecaries of the new company, upon great pains therein contained.

Furthermore, the proclamation even commanded that none should presume to petition his Majesty for alteration of the aforesaid order.

The royal mind being thus shown to be absolutely obdurate and made up on the subject, the Grocers' Company sought a remedy for their complaint in another place.

Accordingly we find that the Grocers' Company and divers apothecaries of London presented a long petition to the House of Commons, which set out the reasons why the new charter should

## THE GROCERY TRADE

be repealed. The petition begins by reciting the state of things which up to that time had existed. It runs as follows :

“The Humble Petition of the Company of Grocers and of divers Apothecaries of the said City :—Most humbly showing that the Company of Grocers being one of the chiefest and ancientest Companies of London, *consisting of Merchants, Retailing Grocers, Apothecaries* and others of divers trades, upon the humble petition and joint suit of the freemen of the mystery of the Grocers and Apothecaries of London, the Company of Grocers and Apothecaries were incorporated, made and confirmed into one body politic by His Majesty’s Patents, in the fourth year of His Highness’s reign, and ever since and long before, the Apothecaries and their medicines and compositions have been yearly, as often as occasion required, viewed, searched, and corrected by the President and Censors of the College of Physicians, by authority of Statute made in the 32nd year of the reign of King Henry *VIII.*, and also by the Wardens of the said Company, assisted with some skilful Apothecaries, about ten years since preferred a Petition to His Majesty for the obtaining of a new Corporation of Apothecaries only.”

The petition of the Grocers goes on to show that the petition of the Apothecaries, just referred to,

## THE GROCERS AND APOTHECARIES

had been put into the hands of the Law Officers of the Crown, with the result that it had been found that by law the king had full power to separate the Apothecaries from the Grocers and erect them into a separate body.

The petitioners allege, with some boldness, that this opinion is against law, and they also set out that the charter of the Apothecaries was inconvenient to the Company of Grocers, having taken from it a fourth part of its members, that the said members were to be forced against their oaths to leave their obedience to the Company, and that the Grocers were restrained in their trade thereby, to their great impoverishment. They also affirm that some good citizens had given over their trade and left the City rather than submit to the new corporation, and that more were likely to follow.

Then follow other reasons under several heads, viz., that the customs of the City would be violated and a bad precedent set up, that damage would be done to other companies of London, and to particular men, and so on.

Notwithstanding these efforts, however, the Apothecaries' Company had come to stay, and doubtless soon proved its usefulness. The separation between the two functions—that of purveying goods and that of compounding medicines—was bound to come as science and civilisation progressed, and it was at this point in our history that the change arrived.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

The Apothecaries went out of Egypt, so to speak, poor, for the Grocers retained the bulk of the property. Nor could the vigorous opposition of the Grocers' Company itself, which saw some of its valuable privileges vanishing, or that of the Court of Aldermen of the City of London, which looked on the separation with disfavour, avail to thwart the king's will. I need hardly say that the Society of Apothecaries exists until this day, and with a Hall at Ludgate Hill where medicines and drugs are yet dispensed—for, unlike others of the companies, that of the Apothecaries is still closely connected with the trade with which its name is identified.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE GROCERS' COMPANY AND PUBLIC DUTIES

THE despotic temper of the Stuarts, shown in many other ways, appeared in their dealings with the City of London in general and with the companies in particular. We have seen the royal will of James, the king "who never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one," exercised over the foundation of the new Apothecaries' Company in 1617. In 1622 James interfered in the election of the Grocers' Company's servants. His successor, Charles I., endeavoured also to influence the disposal of the Company's property and that of their Church patronage.

We have seen that in the reign of Elizabeth the City companies were expected, and, indeed, compelled, to contribute large sums of money for providing soldiers, sailors, and ships for the defence of the country. Thus did the arbitrary tax called "ship-money" grow up, the levying of which was the occasion of so many disasters to Charles I. a few years later. The Grocers' Company was among those corporations and individuals from whom

## THE GROCERY TRADE

resistance came. In 1639 Charles made his last attempt to levy the hated impost; and on April 8 of that year a letter was received by the Wardens from the Lord Mayor "for the loane of £100 from this Company for six months, towards the setting forth and furnishing of a ship." The order did not commend itself to the Court of Assistants any more than similar demands were doing to the country at large; and accordingly, after the subject had been well considered, it was resolved "that forasmuch as it appears that this Company is much indebted, and hath yearly paid ship-money, and hath heretofore lent several sums of money to this city for the like occasions, which are not yet repaid, and for diverse other things, it is resolved and agreed by this court not to lend the said money required by the said letter, unless sufficient security be given for repayment thereof at the end of six months."

However, the next year, 1640, found that the necessities of the monarch, now fast hurrying towards his undoing, were met by the Grocers' Company, and that to the tune of £6000 and £4000 respectively. This year the Company received a new charter from the king, and hence it is fair to conclude that the transaction was in the nature of a bargain.

Three years later the Grocers were paying £30 a week to Parliament towards the support of the troops, as well as £6 for the defence of the City with chains and engines, and £8 for the relief of

## THE GROCERS AND PUBLIC DUTIES

wounded soldiers. All these exactions pressed so heavily upon the Company that it was ordered that £1000 worth of plate should be taken out of the treasury and sold for the payments of debts. The same year a sum of £4500 was the Grocers' share of a total of £50,000 ordered to be raised from the companies by the Lord Mayor "for defence of the City in these dangerous times, as the Parliament forces are approaching." This forced the Wardens to sell all the plate except £300 worth, which was retained for necessary use. One would have thought that now at length the exactions of Government would have ceased ; but it was not so, for in 1645 the Committee of Safety, sitting at the Haberdashers' Hall, sent for the Wardens of the Grocers' Company and informed them that they had learned that the Company was indebted to one Richard Greenough in the sum of £500, who had, as they alleged, been found a delinquent to the Parliament. They therefore demanded a speedy payment of the £500 to themselves. The Court, whom the Wardens consulted, found resistance useless ; so they were obliged to borrow the money on the Company's seal and "restore the bond."

The old tradition of charitable and philanthropic practices was well maintained in this period. In this connection a note as to the granaries maintained by the Grocers', as by the other great companies, should be made.

The first notice of the companies being compelled

## THE GROCERY TRADE

to assist in the provision of corn occurs in 1521, when an Act of the Common Council of the City decreed that £1000 was to be borrowed on account of the great dearth and scarcity of wheat. This was to be levied by way of a loan from the City companies, according to the resources of each. Moneys were lent by the companies from year to year for this purpose. Thus in 1545 there was a great arrival of foreign wheat, and the companies were called upon to assist in purchasing it. On this occasion the Grocers' Company subscribed £100, as did also the Mercers', Drapers', and Merchant Tailors', no other company furnishing anything like the same amount. The Chamberlain of the City was security for the repayment of this loan, as of a similar one the next year.

In 1577 a conference was called on the subject whether stores of corn should be provided and kept by the companies; or by the City, upon loans from the companies by order of the Court of Aldermen. The queen's Council had required that 5000 quarters of wheat at least should be kept in the City against emergencies. It was finally agreed in October 1578 that the companies should provide quotas of corn according as each should be assessed, and that the City should give them rooms in the Bridge House for storing it up. Here, in common with the other twelve great companies, that of the Grocers had a store allotted to it. This arrangement continued until 1596, when an

## THE GROCERS AND PUBLIC DUTIES

alteration took place, the companies then building granaries of their own. That of the Grocers was at Bridewell.

It is noteworthy that the money for the purpose of keeping up the supply of corn was provided by a contribution from the members of the Company, and two of the livery were periodically appointed, under the name of “Corne Renters,” to collect it.

Now, although this quasi-communal provision of corn had previously been designed to ensure that there should never be a lack of the staff of life in the City, as the carrying out of this policy progressed real utility and charity began to be lost sight of. Applications were made to borrow the companies' stores from quarters which should have been above it, and attempts were made to force the companies into selling for mere private advantage. In particular the history of the Grocers gives two remarkable illustrations of this. The first of these discloses a curious instance of royal poverty and meanness, and comes down to us in a letter addressed in 1622 to the Wardens of the Company by the Duke of Lenox, Lord High Steward. It was a demand that thirty or forty quarters of the best and whitest wheat might be lent for the use of the Court. Repayment was promised the next month, at the latest, when the king's stores should have arrived. The Wardens at first did not care to accede to the demand, but at last reluctantly lent ten quarters to his Majesty. It is doubtful whether it was

## THE GROCERY TRADE

ever repaid. The other case is one in which the Privy Council tried to force the Company to buy a quantity of rye, a grain for which there was but little demand, which had been brought into the kingdom by divers merchants trading to the countries of the East. The Court of the Company firmly but respectfully declined the transaction.

On another occasion (1642) of a different kind the companies answered with the greatest readiness a call on their charity made by the distressed Protestants of Londonderry ; and the Grocers in particular gave them 100 quarters of corn.

It may also be mentioned by anticipation that after the Restoration in 1660 a sum of £12,000 was levied by Common Council on the City companies to be lent out in corn as a present to the king. The Grocers' proportion was £1080, which they freely gave as an act of honour and respect from the City, quaintly adding that it might in due time conduce to the singular advantage and benefit of the Company.

The custom of thus storing corn continued until the Great Fire, when the companies' mills and granaries were destroyed, and these were never afterwards renewed.

With regard to the relation between the Grocers' Company and the Commonwealth, it is worthy of note that the " Committee of Safety " appointed to watch over the interests of the nation in 1641, met at Grocers' Hall for several years.

## THE GROCERS AND PUBLIC DUTIES

In 1652 a special committee entitled the "Committee of Corporations" was appointed by the Parliament. It seems that it was the duty of this body to inquire into the validity of charters, and on December 1 of that year the Grocers' charter was called for. The Wardens were directed by the Court to proceed with caution, taking the original and also a copy, and instructed not to let the original go out of their hands unless peremptorily required to do so. A proposal for confirming and renewing the charter appears to have followed the interview, and the Company left the matter in the Wardens' hands. Cromwell, who was made Law Protector the next year, is stated to have granted the Company a new charter by which it was empowered to make bylaws for its government, and, amongst other privileges, it gave the power to levy a fine of £30 on a member on his admission. Possibly this was to enable the Company to replenish its impoverished chest. However that may be, no trace of the Cromwellian charter now remains; and if it ever existed, it doubtless went the way of all such documents at the Restoration, when the acts of the republican Government were nullified and disowned.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

THE king came to his own again in 1660 ; and as it happened that the Lord Mayor of the year was a grocer, that dignitary played no small part in welcoming the returning monarch. Every one knows with what a fever and fervour of loyalty the king, Charles II., was acclaimed, and the City was by no means behindhand in paying its respects to the Sovereign, and lavishing upon him every token of joyful recognition.

On May 29, 1660, Charles entered London, and Thomas Allen (or Alleyne), the Grocer Mayor, received him with great state, and was knighted on the occasion. On June 14 the Lord Mayor went forth to meet the king, the day being that of his Majesty's entry into London in triumph. Sir Thomas Allen was again honoured by being made a baronet. The Grocers' Company, for their portion of the pageant, provided "thirty persons as riders, and each a man, in livery, to attend the Lord Mayor, for the more magnificent reception of the King's most excellent Majesty in his passage through

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

the City." On July 5 the king again came to the City, this time attended by both Houses of Parliament, and was entertained with them at the Guildhall, when, of course, the grocer Lord Mayor occupied the chair. Previously to these two visits the king had consented to become a member of the Company of Grocers, and the Lord Mayor acquainted the Court of Assistants "that he had, by special friendship at Court, procured the moving of His Majestie to owne the Company of Grocers for his Company."

It may here be noted that the mayoralty of Thomas Allen had been inaugurated on October 29, 1659, with a pageant "done at the cost and charges of the ever-to-be-honoured Company of Grocers." This fact gives rise to the reflection that even in the time of Puritanism the City did not forego its methods of celebrating the elections of its chief magistrates. However that may be, the Lord Mayor's Show of Thomas Allen was noteworthy in that it was described as partaking of the character of a lecture on medicine. Not only were groceries mentioned in the verses wherewith his lordship was saluted, but drugs were also alluded to, as, for example, in the two following stanzas :

Your currans from Zant  
When your worships want,  
Come flying as wood,  
In vessels good ;

## THE GROCERY TRADE

And reasons\* you know  
Come from Maligo ;  
Dates, figs, cloves and nutmegs, with sugar and rice ;  
The pepper and ginger,  
That nose-toasting twinger,  
Then synamon and mace and other such spice.

Then casia and myrrh,  
We next must prefer,  
With fine frankingsense,  
That doth cost you pence :  
Then sweet benjamine  
Doth draw storax in,  
With *sena*, and *china*, and *rhuberb* so good :  
All the next I can tell a  
Is *sarsaparella*,  
Which strengthens the body and cleanseth the blood.

Thus, whatever might have been the extent of the sole right of the apothecaries to compound and dispense medicines, the grocers still plainly sold drugs ; and Orridge goes so far as to say that the “ Company of Grocers were the druggists of the time.” This is amply confirmed by the charters granted during the thirty years following the Restoration, by Charles II., James II., and William and Mary, to the Grocers’ Company. The right to sell drugs was not, however, maintained without a struggle. On this occasion it was from the Physicians that the danger was apprehended. In 1664 they had obtained a charter of incorporation which

\* Raisins are still called “ reasons ” in some parts of the country.

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

seemed likely to abridge the sphere of the Company's activities. Accordingly "divers members of the Grocers' Company trading in drugs made suit and request for the countenance and protection of the Court of the Company in freedom of their trade, against the invasion of the College of Physicians, who, having lately obtained from His Majesty a patent with new and strange power of privilege and search, seizure, fine, and imprisonment, are attempting the passing of a bill in Parliament for the ratification of the same; which, if effected, will be an insupportable inconvenience and prejudice."

The aid of the Court was granted, and a committee was appointed to consult and instruct counsel to defend them before the committee in Parliament; and it was likewise ordered that the charges incurred by the Druggists for the defence of their right against the Physicians should be defrayed by the Grocers' Company. The right to sell drugs was maintained, as we shall see, by reference to the charter granted to the Grocers' Company by James II. some years later.

In 1684 a notable event occurred in the history of municipal and other corporations. This was the issue of the notorious writ "Quo Warranto," by the authority of which inquiry was made into the validity of all charters. The writ was ostensibly directed against the City of London, with the Corporation of which the companies were, of course, intimately connected. The City charter was arbi-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

trarily and illegally declared forfeited in the Trinity term of the above year ; and some of the companies, terrified by the proceedings, and apprehending that they would be the next victims, surrendered their charters. The Wardens of the Grocers' Company on March 28, 1684, reported to the Court that they had received the writ "Quo Warranto," in common with the other companies. A committee was elected to deal with the matter, including the Lord Mayor, the Earl of Berkeley, Sir William Hooker, and others. The committee appointed a deputation to wait on the Secretary of State to inquire what was the king's pleasure ; to whom answer was returned that what the Crown intended was not to abolish the ancient charter of the Company, but to reserve to itself the right of appointing its officers. The Company decided to surrender its charter ; and, at the same time, petition for the king's pardon (for they feared they must have highly offended him), and ask that the charter might be restored. The surrender and petition were presented to the king at Windsor on April 12 by a deputation of grocers, including Sir James Edwards, Sir John Moore, and other members. They were received by his Majesty very kindly, and were promised that the matter should be looked into preparatory to their being granted a confirmation of the charter.

On December 18 new charters were issued to the companies. These were by no means in the

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

same terms and on the same conditions as those which had just been surrendered, but under such restrictions as the king should think fit. A proviso was inserted that, although they might choose their own officers, these should have received the sacrament six months before their election according to the forms of the Church of England. The Wardens' and Clerks' names were to be presented to the king for confirmation. In a word, all liberty of will and action was destroyed.

Three months afterwards Charles II. died. James II. succeeded on February 6, 1685, and one of his first acts was to use the power just conferred in an attempt to influence the companies' selection of voters by packing them with liverymen likely to conform to his will in the selection of members of Parliament for the City. In 1688 James II. had come to the length of his tether—the measure of the Stuarts was filled to the brim. In that year James made an act of restitution to the Grocers' Company, with others, under pressure of the rumoured coming of the Prince of Orange, on the basis of the charter of Henry VI. and that of the fifteenth of Charles I. A hasty Order in Council was made preparatory to the removal of all restriction which had been imposed under the "Quo Warranto."

The renewal of the Charter in 1684 offered, to quote Baron Heath, "an excellent opportunity of framing a new set of bylaws," and, availing

## THE GROCERY TRADE

themselves of the assistance of the Earl of Mulgrave, their Master for the year, they procured what is termed in the records "an enlargement of their Charter." This enlargement extended the jurisdiction of the Company over all confectioners, druggists, tobacconists, and tobacco-cutters.

It was therefore decreed that

"All manner of person and persons of the mystery or art of grocery and of the mystery or arts of a confectioner, druggist, tobacconist and tobacco-cutter, of and in the city aforesaid, or the suburbs precincts or liberties thereof, or within three miles of the city aforesaid, exercising, or who shall hereafter exercise the arts aforesaid or any of them, may and shall be by force of these presents, one body politic and corporate . . . by the name of the Mystery of Grocers of the City of London."

The Charter also continued the right of trade search to the Company, directing that the

"Wardens of the Company for the time being may for ever and at all times hereafter have the oversight searching correction and government of all and singular persons of the mysteries of confectioners, druggists and tobacconists."

They were also granted

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

“power and authority to punish all offenders for deceit and incompetent occupation or execution of the mystery or art of grocery aforesaid and the other arts or mysteries aforesaid, according to their sound discretion and the ordinances so to be made as aforesaid by them and their successors.”

Finally, in 1690, the second year of William and Mary, all pre-existing charters were declared to be abolished and annulled, and a charter was granted upon which the Company still relies as the source of its powers and rights. By it all existing privileges were confirmed. It refers to “grocers, confectioners, druggists, tobacconists, tobacco-cutters, sugar-bakers, and refiners of sugar in the City or within three miles thereof.”

Thus at the beginning of the century the Company lost the apothecaries ; at the end they gained the tobacconists and sugar-refiners.

Under Charles II. the grocer was to add, little by little, many new articles to his stock-in-trade, but first were to come those disastrous calamities the Great Plague and the Great Fire. It is hardly necessary to say that during the plague trade was paralysed. The tradesmen put up their shutters and retired to their parlours, there to await the day of visitation.

The journal of a wholesale grocer who lived in Wood Street, Cheapside, has come down to us.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

On the premises lived the grocer, his wife, five children, two maidservants, two apprentices, a porter, and a boy. At the approach of the plague the grocer sent the boy home to his friends in the country, he gave the elder apprentice the rest of his time, and he put the porter on guard. For five long months the household remained prisoners. Five months with trade at an absolute standstill, and in not one, but every shop ! Chroniclers of the time tell us that often servants and apprentices, when attacked by the plague, were thrust out to die in the streets ; another lamented that the apprentices, "the children of Knights and Justices of the County," were rated as beggars and buried in the highway.

The plague having subsided, next came the Great Fire, when ten million pounds' worth of damage was done, and most of the grocers of the City lost their all—houses and warehouses, stock, debts, everything swept away by the flames. Grocers' Hall was burnt to the ground, and only a summer-house standing in the garden escaped. The plate was melted, the furniture destroyed. Happy to relate, the Company's archives and documents, which were in this summer-house or "turret," were preserved. These may be seen in facsimile to-day in the pages of Kingdon.

It is a matter of history that the citizens set to work manfully to rebuild the fair city. Very soon the ground was covered with houses and shops, the

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

localities and streets being preserved as before, although plans had been prepared to lay out the new city on a more regular and beautiful scale.

From the Harleian Miscellany can be gathered very interesting information as to the state of trade and the life of the tradesman in the years shortly following the Great Fire. The author of "The Grand Concern of England," who describes himself as "a lover of his country," takes a review of English society, which he apparently considered to be going to the dogs, and then suggests certain remedies to Parliament. The year 1673 is the date of this production, which is as verbose as documents of the time usually were. When he comes to survey the citizens and tradesmen, he observes that they complain for want of trade, but really without a cause; and though so many tradesmen failed yearly, trade had never been greater than it then was. He rather saw the cause of so many failures in high living and too much luxury—probably reactions in this reign from the dourness of the Puritanism of the Commonwealth. However, the condition of things did not warrant this policy, for there were alleged to be five times as many of most trades as were in existence twenty or thirty years before. To this state of things the traders themselves had contributed by taking double or treble the number of apprentices, for the sake of the premiums received with each and the cheap labour they would be able to count on, and had thus spoilt trade by creating too many

## THE GROCERY TRADE

traders. Nevertheless, apprentices had caught the prevailing taste for luxury, in which they were encouraged by the example of their masters. It was recommended by the author of the pamphlet that they should be made to do their share of servile work, and be thus kept humble, and less proud and less insolent and quarrelsome with their service, usage, and diet than they had lately become. The love of luxury followed the apprentice into his tradesman's days, and when setting up in business—which he would do as soon as he came out of his time—he would expect to have as good a house as his master, keep as high a table, and lay out half of his thousand-pound capital in furnishing his house, with the idea of making a good match, with a wife who would bring him another thousand pounds as her marriage portion. But the wife would not feel that justice had been done unless she too could spend at once three or four hundred pounds out of the money she had brought her husband in finery such as cupboards of plate, a necklace of pearls, earrings, diamond rings, lace, embroidered hose, and other fine raiment. Thus the money to be invested in the new business was seriously curtailed. But the extravagance of the newly married couple is said not to have rested there; for the wife, encouraged to think herself some one great by her husband, would not stir out of doors without a coach, and spent more in the hire of such a vehicle than the sales in the shop came to. All this would take the young

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

woman into fast society, and they were “so courted and gallanted, that oftentimes they were persuaded into such inconveniences, as proved fatal to their husbands as well as to themselves.” The writer of this pamphlet goes on to say that the husband himself was most to blame, as originally the cause of his own ruin. “Nothing will serve them, but live at this rate, keep their wives thus fine, expose them to temptations by setting them in their shops in tempting dresses, thinking to invite customers.” The upshot of this was often the downfall of the wife and the ruin of the tradesman. Other young tradesmen, when a little prosperity fell in their way, were said to “grow high, keep their coaches, have their country-house, the candle burning thus at both ends.” These luxurious courses, together with decay of trade, are alleged as the cause of so many failures at this time—the thirteenth year of Charles II.’s restoration and the seventh after the Great Fire, when London had already risen in great degree from its ashes. But the City was already noted for the great rents that tenants had to pay for shops, houses, or warehouses within its precincts. So much was this the case that the writer alleges that trade had gone to the other end of the town, where rents were lower. Tradesmen who were content to live in the City before the fire had begun to fix their abodes in the suburbs, to the destruction of the City. Evidently, moreover, many had removed their

## THE GROCERY TRADE

businesses to the suburbs, for he complainingly asks, “ Why should they not come into the City again, and make that the seat of trade ? ” Although the City had been rebuilt, the traders, notwithstanding their oaths when bound apprentices and made free, in many cases would not return to the City, a fact which greatly incensed the writer of the pamphlet, who quaintly says that a man who would “ make no conscience of forswearing himself merely to gain a little advantage in his trade ” would make no conscience of cheating *him*, and therefore should have none of his custom.

Another complaint was that the beginners, who were obliged to keep shops heavily rented, rated, and taxed, in order to gain custom (these dues being in London treble those of any county in England), had to meet an unfair form of competition from the older tradesmen. The latter, he says, having a large circle of customers, were able to give up their shops and take a country-house at a small rent, paying not the sixth part of taxes that were paid in London, and so to carry on their trade in London in warehouses. He hints that magistrates who did this, and by their sordid avarice spoilt trade for the young beginners, ought not to have any manner of government or power in or over the City. In other respects this “ lover of his country ” desired a return to the simplicity of the good old days, as he probably thought them, of the Commonwealth.

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

However, this somewhat pessimistic pamphleteer did not altogether succeed in quelling the spirit of the time; nor did his forecast of the ruin of his country, and of London in particular, prove a true one. Trade was in the course of time destined to right itself and to attain to greater things than ever before, as the nation grew and expanded both in population and riches. It will be my task to follow, as far as possible, some of the developments which that part of it represented by the grocery trade underwent.

The vigilance of the Grocers' Company in regard to the oversight of their trade and its interests is evidenced by a petition presented to Parliament by the members of the Company, in conjunction with other London traders, in 1691. In this a complaint was made concerning a class of people called pedlars, hawkers, and petty chapmen, who, contrary to law, "do carry about, dispose, and sell in cities and towns of this kingdom very great quantities of several sorts of goods and commodities belonging to the said trades, to the ruin and destruction of the said tradesmen, and to the great inconvenience and danger of the whole nation in general." Nineteen reasons were given for these men being brought within the purview of the statutes, it being pointed out that most of them were aliens and that no fewer than 10,000 of them were alleged to be touring the country. From this petition it seems evident that the Grocers'

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Company considered itself to be to some extent entrusted with the guardianship of the whole trade; and that it further thought that should the hawking of grocers' wares be tolerated and become general all supervision of the retailing of groceries would be rendered ineffectual and nugatory.

At this period, a country grocer would travel once a year to London on horseback in the company of friends to give orders for goods. The journey, which usually took some days, would be beset with difficulties, not the least being the highwaymen who then beset the public roads. Having reached London in safety, the grocer would give his various orders, some of which were to be sent home by coasting-vessels and some by carriers. The charges for carriage by road from London to Lancashire varied from 3*s.* to 5*s.* per cwt. and these waggons would be accompanied by guards bearing quaint flintlock firearms to protect them from the Jack Sheppards of the day. Only the cheaper kind of goods were entrusted to the ships as it was not an unfrequent occurrence for a vessel with all it contained to be captured by one of the French privateers which infested our coasts.

A country grocer would take an apprentice for seven years, receiving fees ranging from £35 to £50, and having taught the apprentice his trade would encourage him to open business for himself. One such apprentice having terminated his apprenticeship, received from his master letters of recom-

## THE RESTORATION AND AFTER

mendation to the wholesale dealers in London, and, with £120 in cash proceeded from Lancaster to London on horseback to make his purchases. When he reached the metropolis, he put up at the “Swan with Two Necks” in Lad Lane,\* afterwards buying goods of sundry persons of the value of £200 and upwards, and paid each of them about half ready money, “as was then usual to do by any young man beginning trade.” He got his goods placed on board an outward bound vessel and then returned homeward to fit up his shop with the aid of a local joiner, his goods arriving about a week later. The apprentices of those days would frequently have their bed in the shop, they being, to quote one writer, “called up at all times of the night to serve customers.”

The life of a trader in the country towns was spent under altogether different conditions and quieter circumstances than to-day, and if he succeeded in making a clear profit of £100 in a year, he assumed he was doing well.

\* This Inn was pulled down in 1845.

## CHAPTER XIX

### RETAILER AND TOKENS

THE story of retail trade in this country in general, and that of the grocer in particular, can be indirectly traced from a study of the tokens issued during the latter part of the seventeenth century and later.

The history of these little discs of copper or other metal really divides itself into two periods. The time of the Commonwealth and the earlier years of Charles II., to be precise, from 1648 to 1679, saw almost every tradesman of any importance making his own money—at least, as far as farthings and halfpennies were concerned! Numbers of these little pieces are still extant, and much learned and antiquarian diligence has been expended on their study, whilst they have been eagerly collected by connoisseurs, and many varieties now repose in the British Museum and other public depositories. As we shall see, the grocer had his share in the production of this private money, and at one time a great many tokens still extant were given by the grocers of

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

Norwich, of Canterbury, of Bristol, or of London in exchange for the silver or gold coin of the realm, he, of course, undertaking to give full value for them whenever they should be tendered at his counter.

At the present day one of our strongest pre-possessions is that to the State alone belongs the prerogative of coining the currency in general use. Such is the statute law of the land, but it was not exactly always so. In the time of Elizabeth the want of a copper coinage was severely felt, yet the Mint made no provision for coining any metal below the value of silver. The Government of that queen, it is true, had under consideration the subject of a copper coinage, but the proposal was not pursued. Permission, however, was given to Bristol about the year 1594 to strike tokens. There is extant a square leaden piece of this city, bearing the device of a ship issuing from a castle (the arms of Bristol) and the date 1591, with the name of the city and the word "Farthing" upon it. It is surmised that this token was but a pattern. In 1594 a letter was sent to the Mayor and Aldermen requiring them to call in all the private tokens which had been issued by divers persons without any authority, and directing that none should make the same without licence from the Mayor.

In the next century the need for a copper coinage, which, in the words of a report to the Council of State, dated 1651, ministered to frugality,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

inasmuch as “ men can have a farthing’s worth and are not constrained to buy more of anything than they stand in need of, their feeding being from hand to mouth,” was severely felt. In the early years of the seventeenth century it was sought to meet this need by the then prevalent device of granting patents to Court favourites to issue half-pence and farthings. On April 10, 1615, Lord J. Harrington, of Exton, Rutland, obtained the monopoly by a patent of this kind.

Now in the popular view a monopoly of coining was no more desirable than many of the other monopolies which were during this period secured to favourites of fortune and the Court by patent, especially as the pieces thus circulated were not equal in intrinsic value to the amount for which they were stamped to be current. The coins issued by the above-named nobleman were nicknamed “ Harringtons,” and tradesmen soon began to defy the Government by resorting to the practice of issuing their own small coinage. Of these thousands are in existence, all dating from the thirty years between 1648 and 1679. The contest was concluded practically by the issue of “ royal farthings,” as they were called, in 1672, although traders continued, as at Norwich, to issue their own tokens for some years later. The contest between the people and the Government during these years, and the success of the former in defying authority, is the more readily understand-





TOKENS ISSUED BY GROCERS, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

able when it is remembered that it took place during the troublous times of the Civil War and the Commonwealth. When "the king came to his own again" the sole right of coining was soon reasserted by the State. It was no longer felt to be beneath the dignity of the Sovereign to coin baser metal than silver, and one interesting phase in the history of commerce came to an end.

But to come to the part the grocer played in this almost universal issuing of tokens. In the revised edition of Boyne's work on this subject notice is taken of no fewer than 3550 different pieces which were issued in London alone during the years under review.

Again, at Norwich the private coinage of farthings and halfpence went on until 1667, when the functions of the local mint so far as copper coins were concerned were taken over by the city authorities. About ninety examples of private traders' tokens issued at Norwich are extant. Of these the most numerous issuers were those who followed the occupation of grocers. No fewer than twenty-nine different examples have come down to us, bearing either the arms of the Grocers' Company or such devices as designate the occupation of the grocer, or at least the positive statement that the issuer, whose name or initials appear upon the coin, was a grocer.

A number of tokens issued in the provinces which have come into my possession lie before me

## THE GROCERY TRADE

as I write. A particularly well-preserved half-penny, which, as a matter of fact, is of exactly the same circumference as a farthing of our own day, but is of wafer-like thinness, bears on one side the well-known shield of the Grocers' Company, encircled by the name of the issuer—Francis Reed, Grocer. On the other side there are the words “In Waymouth, 1669,” in a circle; in the centre, “His Half-penny.”

Another specimen is much smaller. It bears the Grocers' arms, or rather shield, encircled by the words “William Stevenson.” On the reverse side appear “I. Abington, Grocer,” and a capital “S” over “W. M.” Still a third example was issued by “William Stayner in Blandford, Grocer.” “W. S.” appears in the centre of one side, and a pair of scales evenly balanced on the other.

It must be noticed that many of these tokens bear a strong family resemblance, as if the dies from which they were struck were made by the same hand. It is said that the engravers of the pieces included Rawlins, who under the Commonwealth fell into great poverty, and from having been employed on the royal coins and seals was glad to accept employment in designing tokens, and was the author of many of the devices they bear. In other cases local artists were employed, who travelled from town to town designing tokens for the various tradesmen. The presses which were

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

used wherewith to strike the tokens were of primitive but effective pattern.

A frame of four-inch oak beams strongly dove-tailed together was made. In the centre of the top beam a rod was fitted, bearing a screw, with handles to turn the same at the top. On the lower end the die was fitted, and exactly underneath, on the upper edge of the lower beam, the counterpart was securely fixed. The disc of metal, cut to the requisite size and thickness, was inserted, and the rod screwed down until the token was firmly and with great pressure squeezed between the die and the counterpart. The result was the impression on both sides of the token. Probably in many cases the tradesman thus coined his own pieces.

It certainly is a strange picture, and one that well illustrates the changes undergone by the grocery trade, which this practice calls up—the grocer preparing for his busy day by setting his apprentices or journeyman to strike off a few hundred halfpence or farthings, so that he may be able to give change to those who tender the silver coin of the realm !

The number of grocers throughout the country who issued tokens upon which appeared the arms of the Grocers' Company are far in excess of those using other devices. The phenomenon may be accounted for by the popularity and wide extension of the Grocers' Company of London, "foreign members," as those who had their business outside

## THE GROCERY TRADE

the Metropolis were called, being scattered about in all parts of the kingdom. The reason for the abundance of grocery tokens cut probably is that the grocers had more need for giving small change than other sorts of tradesmen. There is, however, abundant evidence that the grocers, and those tradesmen who were so closely allied to grocers that they then came under the same generic title, such as druggists, tobacconists, and even apothecaries (at that date), were by this time a large and important part of the community in Norwich and other places outside London. Besides the wide range of tokens mentioned in proof of this, the Grocers' device may still be seen on many monuments erected to Norwich citizens in the next century in various churches of the city, and the coat of arms of the Company is conspicuous in the fine carving on the backs of the Corporation seats in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall. The shield of the Grocers also appears on the stained glass of church windows, as, for instance, in the east window of St. Andrew's, where it is repeated four times. These are proofs that the grocers were not only numerous and wealthy, but also that they were not ashamed of their calling and were willing to acknowledge in the most public and permanent manner that they followed an ancient and honourable occupation.

That many of the grocer issuers of tokens at this period were substantial tradesmen and citizens of

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

eminence and importance may even be gathered from a study of the tokens still extant. Many interesting particulars have also been brought to light through investigations suggested by these little pieces of metal.

Thus, one Charles Morgan, grocer, issued a halfpenny on which it is stated that his place of business was in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, and the device of an angel appeared. Curiously enough, the following advertisement occurs in *The Newes* (No. 62, August 4, 1664, p. 500): “A Lexicacus, or the famous *Spirit of Salt* of the World, good against the Scurvy, Fevours, the Stone, Rheums, &c. prepared philosophically (not after the common way) by Constantine Rodochuaces, an approved *Grecian Chemist*. . . . And it is likewise to be had at Mr. Morgans, Grocer, in *Henrietta Street, Covent-Garden*.”

Another advertisement which appeared in the *London Gazette*, No. 242, March 9-12, 1667, runs as follows: “Several Chymicall preparations, besides those mentioned by Mr. Boyle in his book of the usefulness of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, made by a skilful hand; are sold by Mr. Morgan, a Grocer, in Henrietta Street, Covent-Garden.”

It is evident that the functions of the grocer and the druggist were still conjoined at this period; that the grocer also sold what one might term “patent” medicines—an article which his modern

## THE GROCERY TRADE

descendants do likewise sometimes include in their stocks.

A curious token was that issued from the famous coffee-house in Exchange Alley near the old Exchange, in the City. It is described as the only extant specimen of the seventeenth century on which the word "tea" occurs. The sign of the coffee-house was the head of the Grand Turk. This appeared on the token surrounded by the words "Morat. ye. Great. Men. did. Me. call" (obverse); the reverse contained the couplet "Where-eare. I. came. I. conquerd. all"; and in the centre was the advertisement "*Coffee Tobacco Sherbet tea and Chocolat reta'l'd in Exchange Ally.*" "Where'er I came I conquered all" was certainly strangely, if unconsciously, prophetic of the vogue which tea, long years afterwards, was to obtain!

The case of a token also occurs which bears the Drapers' arms, although it is that of "Edward Roberts, grocer, near York House in Le Stran." This grocer was appointed by notice in the *London Gazette* (No. 174, July 15-18, 1667), in the room of a Mrs. Warwick, to receive all letters, paid and unpaid, and to carry them to the office for despatch. There had been complaints that unscrupulous persons had represented themselves to be authorised to collect letters who for the sake of retaining the postage fee had subsequently destroyed them. So to prevent the like abuse his Majesty's Postmaster-General appointed, amongst

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

others, Edward Roberts, grocer, at the Bay-tree, over against York House, who had given security and voluntary oath for his faithfulness.

There have been many grocers since who have combined the office of postmaster with the oversight of their business; they can look upon Mr. Roberts as certainly one of the earliest of those to whom the responsibility was committed.

But it would be an endless task to follow all the paths whither a study of the pieces issued during this thirty years would lead us. An example from the country, however, must not fail to be noticed (it is illustrated on p. 257), for it is a rare instance of a seventeenth-century grocer having a number of branch establishments, for which he issued a common token. The obverse bears the inscription "JOHN. LETHBRIDGE. of South," around the initials "I. M. L." The reverse is inscribed "Tawton, Chagford and Moreton his halfe penny." As the same grocer also issued a token for a shop in the village of Zeal, it seems that he had four places of business situated in the same locality. Thus the multiple-shop concern, as it has been called, is not altogether such a novel method of trading as one might think.

The devices which appear on a large number of tokens include, apart from the shield of the Grocers' Company, with its chevron and cloves, sometimes a pair of scales evenly balanced, to infer the justness of the issuer's dealings. Less seldom a sugar-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

loaf or loaves is the device ; and in one instance, at all events, what appears to be a tea-chest is introduced. In a majority of instances the design included nothing more artistic than lettering—the place of issue, the name of the tradesman, sometimes, but not always, the trade he followed, and the initials of his wife and himself, together with a statement of the value the piece represented.

However, this “ taking of the law into their own hands ” by the trading community—issuing its own copper coinage—was not to be suffered to continue for long. An Order in Council was promulgated for making current his Majesty’s farthings and halfpence of copper, and forbidding all others to be used under the threat of severe pains and penalties. This proclamation was universally obeyed throughout the kingdom, except in one or two places, as in Chester and Norwich. In the former case the Crown took legal proceedings against the city, but on the Member of Parliament for Chester and the Speaker of the House of Commons interceding with the Law Officers of the Crown the proceedings were stopped, on condition that the law was obeyed. Norwich had to petition the king for pardon, which was graciously granted, and the tokens were then called in by the public bellman. The issue of tokens continued in Ireland until 1679. Thus closed the first period of our history during which a private coinage held the field.

A hundred years later, for a second time copper



L & T. SHARPE.  
Salisbury



M. LAMBE & SON.  
Bath

WM. STINTON.  
St James St London



J. FIELDINGS.  
Manchester

GARRAWAY.  
Croydon



JOHN DOWNING.  
Huddersfield



TOKENS ISSUED BY GROCERS, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

coins, and even pieces of silver, were to be put in circulation by the enterprise of individual citizens, driven thereto by necessity rather than by choice. From 1767 to 1816 many handsome examples of the art of die-sinking saw the light in the shape of tradesmen's tokens. Of these numerous specimens have come down to us from all parts of the kingdom, a selection of which, as illustrating the use of tokens by the grocer of the period, forms the subject of the plate opposite.

What were the circumstances which made this fresh recourse to private enterprise to make good the deficiencies of the State currency necessary ? It will be remembered that the Government was always more or less in difficulties at the time from the imminent danger to the country of foreign invasion. The supply of legal copper ran short, for between the years 1755 and 1769 no minting of halfpence and farthings took place, except of about ten tons of the former and seven of the latter. The copper coins that were in circulation had become very worn and defaced ; the same was true of the silver pieces ; yet the Government took no steps to remedy the inconvenience caused the public, and especially the trading community, by this state of things.

Private resource came to the rescue in the persons of merchants and shopkeepers, the banks and public bodies, and the result was a return, for a time, to the circulation of privately coined money.

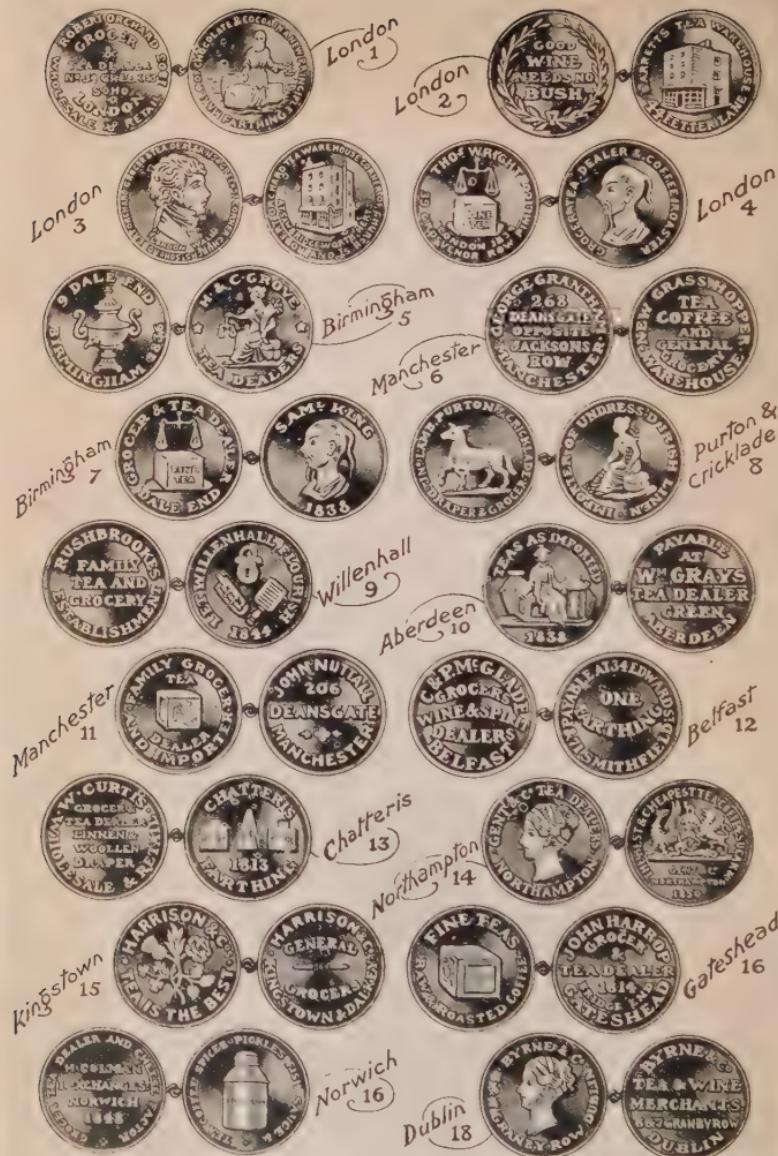
## THE GROCERY TRADE

Thus the embarrassments into which the free exchange of commodities had fallen were remedied ; and the private currency subserved an important purpose, there being sufficient evidence to prove that through its use trade generally received a degree of assistance during a period of monetary and commercial peril that at the time was recognised and appreciated.

Nor was the issue of tokens confined to the humbler varieties. Gold in a few cases, and more frequently silver, tokens were issued by public bodies, and even by private tradesmen. Thus in 1812 the town of Reading issued a 40s. piece in gold, Sheffield a half-guinea in 1812. It is curious to recall that a specimen of the 40s. piece just mentioned was sold in 1900 in London for £16.

As may be supposed, the tokens issued during this second period are far handsomer and more presentable than those of the reign of Charles II. and of the Commonwealth. A comparison of the illustrations given of each period will make this evident. As showing that the grocers took their full share in the issue of tokens at this period, I have reproduced a selection, which, of course, is by no means exhaustive. It will be noted that just as the shield from the arms of the Worshipful Company of Grocers was used to adorn the earlier issue of tokens, the grocer, whether in London or the country, frequently made use of the entire arms





TOKENS ISSUED BY GROCERS, NINETEENTH CENTURY

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

with which to stamp his halfpence or farthings. Thus in the case of John Downing, of Huddersfield, the obverse of the token, issued in 1793, bears a very well executed emblazonment of the Grocers' arms ; whilst the reverse shows East India House, the headquarters of "John Company," which at that period held a monopoly of the tea trade. Again, J. Fieldings, of Manchester, issued a "promissory halfpenny" the same year bearing the arms of the Grocers' Company. On the other side of the very well executed coin there occur the words "Payable at M. Fieldings, Grocer and Tea Dealer," surrounding the device of a heart, which was probably a species of trade-mark. At Bath M. Lambe and Son, tea-dealers and grocers, issued a token a year later (1794) on which the India House appears, and having a laden camel, upon which rays of the sun shine down, upon the other side—evidently again taken from the Grocers' arms. The legend surrounding the camel runs : "Teas, Coffee, Spices and Sugars." Another token, dated 1796, has the full arms of the Company, surrounded by the words "Fine Teas, &c." On the reverse an excellent representation of Salisbury Cathedral from the north appears, with the legend "Cathedral Church of Sarum." This interesting coin was issued by L. and T. Sharpe, of Salisbury. Thus we find the Grocer's arms used by retail traders in all parts of the country not much more than a hundred years ago.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Other tokens bear various devices either referring to the trade, the locality, or the personality of the issuer. Wm. Stinton, of St. James's Street, London, had a token struck in 1795 to represent a halfpenny. He used the device of a grasshopper, which, it may be recalled, was the badge of that old City worthy Sir Thomas Gresham, as we are reminded by the vane on the tower of the Royal Exchange. The insect is surrounded by the legend "Fine Teas of the Rough Flavour," a singular testimony to the taste of our forefathers in tea some hundred years ago. The reverse side of the coin bears the words "Patent Cocao Warehouse," and the date. On another token, issued by D. Garraway, of Croydon, a tea-pot adorns one side and the intertwined initials "D. G." the other. Round the tea-pot are the words "The Best Teas in Croydon, 1797," and the initials are surrounded by "Payable at Garraways Croydon. Halfpenney."

(The whole of the foregoing tokens are illustrated on p. 267.)

It does not appear that the issuer of the token often caused his own portrait to be impressed upon it. An exception, however, is noticeable in the case of Robert Orchard. A farthing of Orchard's in an excellent state of preservation now lies before me, bearing his portrait most beautifully impressed thereon. He was a handsome man, and, it is said, was particularly cognisant of the fact. His head





ROBERT ORCHARD  
A LONDON GROCER, 1804

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

appears on his token with clean-shaven lips and chin, wavy hair and pigtail, and the neck is swathed in high white cravat.

Fortunately we are able to compare the portrait on the token with an engraving of Robert Orchard which he himself published, with facsimile of his signature, in May 1803. He was a man of substance, for besides being a grocer and tea-dealer, carrying on business at No. 34 Greek Street, corner of Church Street, Soho, London, he had a business at Sawbridgeworth, Herts, and he was a manufacturer of chocolate and cocoa on a new and improved principle, wholesale, retail, and for exportation. His signature is written in a fine bold hand. He also sported a coat of arms, or rather a shield emblazoned with a chevron of three pears, doubtless in allusion to his name.

Robert Orchard issued tokens of the value of a halfpenny and of a farthing in 1803, and again of a farthing in 1804. On the farthing of the former year, as I have noted, his head is reproduced, with the lettering of his name and place of business surrounding it. The reverse of the coin bears a representation of the house and shop at Greek Street, Soho, with the lettering "Robert Orchard, Tea Warehouse, corner of Church Street, and at Saw Bridgeworth [*sic*] Herts." Another farthing issued by the same grocer in 1803 is impressed with quite a little scene. A Chinaman, surrounded by tea-chests, with the sea, upon which a ship appears, as

## THE GROCERY TRADE

a background, points to the inscription on the coin : " Maker of chocolate and Cocoa on a New Principle. Farthing." The reverse bears the inscription, " Robert Orchard Grocer and Tea Dealer., no 34 Greek St. Soho London, Wholesale and Retail, 1803."

Other devices seen on farthings issued by grocers of the period include a sugar-loaf with the initials " W. C." upon it, flanked on each side by a tea-canister, that on the right labelled " Hyson " and that on the left " Sowchong." Its date is 1813, and its issuer W. Curtis, wholesale and retail grocer and tea-dealer, linen and woollen draper. Mr. John Nuttall, of 206 Deansgate, Manchester, is described as family grocer, tea-dealer and importer, and a tea-chest is the device. Another tea-chest, surrounded by the words " fine teas, raw and roasted coffee," appears on a farthing of John Harrop, of Gateshead (1814).

The issue of these private farthings continued till as late as 1850. Several bearing the date 1838 and 1839 are in the author's possession ; notably one of Thos. Wright, of 39 Grosvenor Row, Pimlico. The obverse has a chest with the words " Fine Tea " upon it, over which hangs a pair of hand scales ; on the reverse is the head of a Chinaman, surrounded by the words " Grocer, Tea Dealer and Coffee Roaster." Yet another of this date is inscribed as " payable at Wm. Gray's Tea Dealer, Green, Aberdeen " ; and beneath the words " Teas

## RETAILER AND TOKENS

as Imported" a Chinaman is seated on a tea-chest, having a large jar and a canister as his supporters. A lamb appears on the token of John Lamb, of Pinton and Cricklade, draper and grocer. On the reverse of this coin there is the figure of a classic female sitting upon a ram, with a cornucopia at her feet and a branch with leaves in her hand. Around is the inscription, " Importer of undress'd Irish linen." Finally, bearing date 1850, a farthing of Gent and Co., tea-dealers, of Northampton, lies before me. It is charged with the girlish head of the late Queen on one side; on the other the arms of the Grocers' Company, somewhat fantastically displayed, are engraved, surrounded by the legend, " The Best and Cheapest Tea, Coffee, Sugar etc."

It has been stated that silver coins were also struck to meet the deficiency and scarcity of the royal currency. This chapter shall close with a description of one of these, issued by " W. Ballans Tea Dealer, Market Place Manchester. Token value one shilling," as the inscription upon it runs. It is a not unhandsome coin, and bears the arms of Manchester on one side between a palm and an oak branch, whilst on the reverse a fine representation of a building, probably one of the public edifices of the Manchester of that day, appears. It bears no date.

As the nineteenth century progressed the necessity for grocers and others supplementing

## THE GROCERY TRADE

the Royal coinage by having pieces of the kind described struck and putting them into circulation ceased. Between 1811 and 1815 there was great activity at the Royal Mint. In 1821 a new copper coinage was issued, and every year since, except 1824, 1832, and 1833, has seen a like issue of pence, halfpence, and farthings. It may be noted that just as in 1672 a copper coinage was first undertaken by the Government, so in 1860 the bronze now in use was substituted for copper, to the manifestly greater convenience of his Majesty's lieges, as any one who has handled the old copper pence will readily admit.

Nevertheless, the fact that the fervour of numismatists and collectors has served to bring together, to preserve and illustrate by research and comparison, the many tokens of both the earlier and later periods, contributes to throw additional light on the history of the trade of these islands ; and not the least interesting part of this has to do with the grocer, who has thus been shown to have all along taken his full share in the trading life of the community.

## CHAPTER XX

### NOTABLE GROCERS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

THAT the trade during this period continued to produce men of intellect and power, is evident from the eminent positions occupied by grocers or the sons of grocers. They supplied the nation not only with many politicians but with a Lord Chancellor, and quite a number of Lord Mayors, Magistrates, Clergymen, and Soldiers ; with certainly one National Poet into the bargain.

The most notable name in our list is that of Baron King, Lord Chancellor of England. In 1669, a son was born to an Exeter grocer, by name Peter King. His father, who carried on business in the High Street, decided to apprentice him to the trade, and arranged his education accordingly, finally placing him behind the counter in his Exeter business. Here for some years he served his father's customers, and delivered their goods. Young King, however, was a great student, and spent all his available cash in purchasing books, which he eagerly devoured in his spare time. His

## THE GROCERY TRADE

uncle, Locke, the famous historian, visiting Exeter, "discovered" his nephew, and, having tested his abilities, decided to send him to Germany to complete his education. Upon his return he became a student at the Middle Temple and took up law as a profession. Later he became a Member of Parliament, and, in 1725, was created Lord Chancellor of England, a position he occupied with much credit for some years, being then raised to the peerage as Baron King. It has been reported by many aged people who knew the parties, that Mr. King, the grocer, decided to visit his son after his appointment as Lord Chancellor, and being of a mercenary disposition, set out on foot to London. He arrived in London, and having found his son's house, he inquired for Peter King, which so irritated the porter, who was unaware of the identity of the caller, that he shut the gate against him, and a scuffle ensued. This attracted the attention of Lord King, who, recognising his father, hastened to the door and fell on his knees to ask his blessing. This action frightened the porter, and he humbly begged for pardon, which was granted him. "He descended to the tomb," in the words of the biographer, "one of the most consistent and spotless politicians who have ever appeared in England."

A notable grocer of the Reformation period was Richard Grafton, described as chronicler, printer, prosperous London merchant and a member of the

## NOTABLE GROCERS

Grocers' Company. Grafton was apprenticed in 1526 to John Blage, a worthy London grocer, whose shop was in Cheapside, and who counted among his customers many of the notabilities of the day, including the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Lisle, Governor of Calais, and Archbishop Cranmer. In the Warden's accounts of the Grocers' Company, it is recorded that Richard Grafton was "received entered and sworn" on November 14, 1526, a fee of 30s. being paid. During his seven years' apprenticeship he was brought into contact with his employer's fashionable *clientèle*, and this doubtless led him to take an active part in the religious controversies of the period. In 1537, about four years after the termination of his apprenticeship, his zeal for the reformed religion led him to arrange for the printing of the Bible in English, and Cranmer gave him a letter of introduction to Thomas Cromwell. Later we find him thanking Thomas Cromwell for having moved the King to license the work, and pressed for a new licence under the Privy Seal to prevent others underselling him. His signature to this petition runs, "Richard Grafton, Grocer." He became printer to the King in 1547, and was printer of the First Book of Common Prayer in 1549. Upon the death of the King his connection with the Court was severed, but he maintained his position in the City, and in 1555 was elected Warden of the Grocers' Company.

## THE GROCERY TRADE

Abraham Cowley, the poet, was another celebrity of the period who traced his descent to the grocery trade, his father being a grocer living in the parish of St. Michael le Querne, Cheapside.

Cowley was born in 1618, and lost his father at an early age. He was carefully educated by his mother, and, through his fame as a poet and prose-writer, rose to be popular in the highest ranks of society. Although Cowley's fame as a poet has seriously diminished, his eminence as a prose-writer is still acknowledged.

A history of the grocers of the past period would be incomplete did I not refer to Sir Henry Keble, Lord Mayor of London, 1510, himself a grocer and the son of a grocer, and one whose magnificence and generosity, in the words of Baron Heath, "entitled him to rank among the eminent members of the Grocers' Company." His benefactions included the gift of £1000 towards the building and decorating of the church of St. Mary Aldermanbury, in Budge Row; one hundred and forty ploughshares to poor husbandmen in Oxford and Warwick; one hundred marks to poor maids' marriages; and to seven poor members of the mystery of grocers 3s. 6d. per week, such poor men to be selected by the Wardens and Associates for the time being. He was buried in the church of St. Mary Aldermanbury in a vault prepared by himself, and his epitaph concluded thus:

## NOTABLE GROCERS

God moves the minds of wealthy men,  
Their works so to bestow.  
As he hath done, that though they die,  
Their virtuous fame may flow.

For some unexplained reason, we are informed by Stow that in later years “his bones were unkindly cast out and his monument pulled down,” and two other members of the Grocers’ Company, each of whom had been Mayors, were buried in his vault.

Another well-known grocer of the period of whom we have now and then a passing glimpse was George Bowles, who, in 1592, represented the City in Parliament. He was Master of the Grocers’ Company in 1606, Sheriff of London in 1608–9, and became Lord Mayor in 1617–18. On his marriage with the daughter of Sir John Hart, a brother grocer, he acquired the mansion in Oxford Place (near Oxford Court), Cannon Street. As typical of his courage in public life it is recorded that on the occasion of the King’s retinue passing through London on a Sabbath day, and during divine service, Sir George Bowles, then Lord Mayor, ordered them to be stopped. On this occurrence being brought to the notice of King James, he gave vent to his kingly anger by exclaiming: “He thought there had been no more kings in England than himself.” When his anger had been somewhat appeased he signed a warrant to the Lord Mayor to let them pass. This order was immediately obeyed by Sir George Bowles who sent this

## THE GROCERY TRADE

reply : “ Whilst it was in my power, I did my duty, but that being taken away by a higher power it is my duty to obey.” This answer so pleased the King that he sent the Lord Mayor his thanks. He died in September 1621, aged eighty-three years, and was buried in St. Swithin’s Church, a handsome memorial being erected to his memory by his wife, Lady Jane Bowles, with the following epitaph :

Honour, Integrity, Compassion,  
These three filled up the life-time of this man.  
Of Honour, the grave Praetorship he bore  
Which he discharged with conscience, Truth and care,  
He possessed Earth, as he might Heaven possess,  
Wise to do right but never to Oppress.  
His charity was better felt than known,  
For when he gave there was no trumpet blown,  
What more can be compressed, in one  
To crown a soul and leave a living name.

Another historical personage was Sir Thomas Middleton, Lord Mayor of London in 1613. He came of a Denbighshire family, and with his brothers Hugh, Thomas, and William was closely associated with the commercial life of London. He was apprenticed to Ferdinando Poyntz, grocer of London, and admitted to the freedom of the Grocers’ Company in January 1582–83. Twenty years later he was elected an Alderman of London, and was knighted by James I. on July 26, 1603. He represented London in Parliament in 1624–

## NOTABLE GROCERS

1626. On the day of his election as Mayor, New River Head was opened by his brother, the celebrated Sir Hugh Middleton. He was married four times, and died in 1681 at Stansted Mountfichet, where he had a mansion and estate. At his death he left some property to the Grocers' Company of the annual value of £7 for the benefit of their poor members.

Reference should also be made to Sir William Hooker, grocer, who became Lord Mayor in 1675-76, and of whom Sir Thomas Player wrote referring to his installation that, "the 29th is the day for the Lord Mayor's installation, a mighty day for custard and mince pies, and what is admirable, on the 14th when the Artillery are madly killing one another, doth Sir William Hooker . . . now nearly being 60 years of age, marry the youngest sister of my lady Dawes, a lady of about 26, an act of strange courage."

Some interesting stories are recorded of the kindly intervention of Sir William Hooker (who carried on business in St. Swithin's Lane) on behalf of persons in lower walks of life. Pepys records in his diary under date of September 3, 1665.

" My Lord Broucher, Sir J. Minnes and I went up to the vestry at the desire of the justices of the peace ; in order to the doing something for the keeping of the plague from growing ; but Lord ! to consider the madness of people of the town,

## THE GROCERY TRADE

who will (because they are forbid) come in crowds along with the dead corpses to see them buried; but we agreed on some orders for the prevention thereof. Among other stories, one was very passionate, methought, of a complaint brought against a man in the town for taking a child from London from an infected house. Alderman Hooker told us it was the child of a very able citizen in Gracious Street, a saddler, who had buried all the rest of his children of the plague, and himself and wife now being shut up in despair of escaping, did desire only to save the life of this little child and so prevailed to have it received stark naked in the arms of a friend who brought it (having put it into fresh clothes) to Greenwich, whereupon hearing the story we did agree it should be permitted to be received and kept in the town."

On another occasion the worthy alderman wrote to Pepys seeking the discharge of a tailor, who had been pressed into the navy, on the ground that he was the sole support of his wife and children, and aged parents.

In the provinces, too, many records may be found of grocers who rose to eminence in public life, not the least interesting of this age being that of Augustine Briggs of Norwich. He was born in 1617, and at twenty-six years of age was found fighting on the King's side at the siege of Tyrone.

## NOTABLE GROCERS

The strenuous support he gave to the King led to his being turned out of the Court of Aldermen. At the Restoration, in 1660, he was restored to his former position and elected Sheriff. His services were much in request as an arbitrator in compromising the differences between various factions after the Restoration, and we find him elected to the Mayoral Chair in 1670, and a Member of Parliament in 1677, and on four other occasions. His early history in military affairs continued, and in later life he became Mayor of the Trained Band or City Militia. He died in 1674 and left his estates at Swardstone towards the maintenance of the Boys' and Girls' Hospitals. He also left £200 to be invested in house property, the proceeds to be devoted by the Mayor towards "putting forth to convenient trades every year two such poor boys of the Ward of St. Peter as can write and read, and who have neither father or mother able to put them forth to such trades, and if there be no such boy in the ward, the money to go to the relief of the necessitous poor."

A handsome monument is erected to his memory in the church of his native place, the inscription testifying to him as "a studious preserver of the ancient privileges of his country; was always firm and resolute for upholding the Church of England, and assiduous and punctual in all the important trusts that were committed to him, whether in the august 'Assembly of Parliament,' his honourable

## THE GROCERY TRADE

commands in the Militia, or his justiciary affairs upon the Bench, gaining the affections of the people by his hospitality and repeated acts of kindness, which he continued beyond his death."

A long list of municipal honours held by grocers might easily be compiled from the annals of the period. Among notable London grocers who became Lord Mayor was the Right Hon. Sir William Laxton, already referred to as the founder of Oundle School. He became Lord Mayor in 1544 and his year of office was distinguished by his being summoned, with the Aldermen to Baynards Castle, where a sum of money was demanded from each of them by King Henry VIII. He died in 1566 and his funeral is thus quaintly described by a diarist of the period—

"The 6 day of August was buried Sir William Laxton, late Lord Mayor, in the Church of St. Mary Aldermury, with a goodle here with V. prynsepalles (and the majesty) and the valans gyltyd and viij dozen of penselles (and) xiij dozen of skochyons and half of bokeram, and a standard and iiij penons and ij baners of (images); and the hawsse, chyrche and the stret hangyd with blake (and) armes; and a cott armur and helmett, target and sword, mantylles and crest a teygerbed with colynbyn and the slype. (There were two) grett and goodly whyst branchys and xxxiiij stayffes torchys and xxxiiij mantyll frysse gownes to powre men, and a c blacke gownes; mornes,

## NOTABLE GROCERS

Master Loges, Altherman, cheyff mornar and master Machyl second Morner and master Wanton iii morner and dyver oder, the lord mare and master Whytt and dyvers odur, and alle the thodur althermen in vyolett ; and then cam the women morners, lades and man althermens wyffes and gentyll women ; and after durge to the plasse to drynke and the compame of the Grocers, and ofter prestes and clarkes, to the place to drynke, and the harolds—and the Waxchandlers and the Penter, to drynke, with many odurs. And the Morrow iij masses sing, ij pryke songe and (the) iij (d) requiem at masse dyd pryc h docher Harpsfelle archeydekyng ; and after to dener for there was a grett diner as I have sene at any berehyng, for ther dynyd many worshepful men and women.”

Seventeen grocers served the City in the office of Lord Mayor in the seventeenth century, and there were numberless instances of the chief magistracy of provincial cities and towns being filled by a grocer. Thus at Derby, in 1660 and in 1684, John Dunnidge (grocer) was Mayor. John Burrell (grocer) was Mayor of Exeter in 1698. Jasper Samways (grocer) filled the post of Chief Magistrate of Dorchester in 1674. John Osborn was Mayor of Norwich in 1660; W. Parmenter, Sheriff in 1676. Thomas Johnson was Mayor of Liverpool in 1670. Richard Harrison of Wisbeach

## THE GROCERY TRADE

was Town Bailiff and a Member of the Corporation in 1675. John Bellamy was Bailiff of the same place in 1682, and his family still exists there. Richard Prime, of Bury St. Edmunds, was thrice chief magistrate of the borough. He died in 1711. Memorials of his family may be seen in the church of Great Saxham, near Bury St. Edmunds. At Yarmouth, Edward Owner was Mayor in 1620, and again in 1625, 1639, and 1640, and he represented the town in the Long Parliament. He endowed the Children's Hospital School with £1500, and dying in 1656, was buried in St. Nicholas Church, the parish church of his native city.

In 1592 a poem entitled, "The Nine Worthies of London," appeared, in which the writer took occasion to eulogise the lives and heroic deeds of at least two members of the Grocers' Company. Another worthy of note was Daniel Rawlinson, a friend of Pepys, founder of the firm of Messrs. Davison, Newman and Co., Wholesale and Retail Grocers. This firm enjoys the unique distinction of being the oldest existing firm of grocers in this country having been established in 1650. Daniel Rawlinson rebuilt Hawkshead School in 1675.

I have already mentioned that this was the age of pageants, with all the lavish expenditure, elaborate preparation, and strange conceits, in which the grocers of London, Norwich, and other cities took their full share.

The water pageant was revived in 1661 after  
284





SIR JOHN MOORE, GROCER,  
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON 1681

## NOTABLE GROCERS

having been abandoned for twenty years, and singularly enough it was the Grocers' Company that revived it, the occasion being the election of Sir John Frederick, one of their members, as Lord Mayor. The spectacle was witnessed by King Charles. Eleven years later the Company had occasion to organise another pageant, this time in honour of Sir Robert Hanson. The City had evidently by this time recovered from the effects of the fire and plague, for Thomas Jordon who composed and arranged the pageant, entitled it "London Triumphant ; or the City in Jollity and Splendour expressed in various Pageants, Shapes, Scenes, Speeches, and Songs, invented and performed for congratulation and delight of the well-deserving Governour Sir Robert Hanson, Knight, Lord Mayor of the City of London." Grocery pageants were also organised in 1673, 1678 and 1681, the last named being the occasion of the inauguration of Sir John Moore as Lord Mayor.

Sir John Moore was a native of Leicestershire, and after coming to London resided in Mincing Lane, where he traded as a merchant. He was a strong Nonconformist and twice refused to accept office in the City. In 1671, he was elected Master of the Grocers' Company, and the same year, overcoming his religious scruples, he agreed to serve as Alderman of Walbrook. Owing to his strong Royalist tendencies, Moore was not alto-

## THE GROCERY TRADE

gether popular in the City, and on being nominated for the Mayoralty in 1681, his election was challenged by Sir John Shorter and Sir Thos. Gold. The victory was to Moore, he having succeeded in obtaining 1831 votes being 300 over his next highest opponent.

Following his election, he delivered the following speech :—

“ Gentlemen and Worthy Citizens.

“ I give you all my hearty thanks for the great Honour you have done this day in choosing me your Chief Magistrate for the year ensuing. It is a very great trust that you have reposed in me and a High and Honourable Employment to which you have called me. It shall be my great Care to the uttermost of my Power with God’s Blessing and your Assistance to discharge it faithfully, It is a work I never did, and requires that Strength I never had which I hope the Lord will grant me. God by you hath called me to it, and I trust will carry me through it.

“ Magistracy is an Ordinance set up by Divine Authority and Government is appointed for the good of Mankind to keep the World in Order to which is due the great Reverence and Obedience. I wish all men did their Duty. I am sorry to hear and see such great Divisions amongst us, and certainly they are in a great error that Promoters of them. It is the design

## NOTABLE GROCERS

of Rome to divide us, it will be the Wisdom of Protestants to prevent and disappoint them by living together as Brethren in Unity amongst themselves. And my request to you all is to exercise Christian Charity, to forbear Reproaching and Backbiting each other, to study Questions amongst yourselves, to discourage Sin and Wickedness, to promote piety and Godliness which will bring Glory to God. Honour to the King and his Government, Peace, Happiness and Prosperity to this City, which God Almighty grant and let all the people say Amen."

As a liberal benefactor to the Grocers' Company, having contributed £500 towards the rebuilding of the Hall ; as the President of Christ's Hospital and donor of £5000 towards the rebuilding the Writing School ; and as the founder of the free Grammar School of Appleby in Leicestershire, Sir John Moore will be long remembered as one of the most generous of men. He died on June 2, 1702, leaving estates valued at £80,000, and he was buried in the Church of St. Dunstan's in the East. His full-length portrait may be seen in the Hall of the Grocers' Company.

It may be added here that a noted writer of the period, Elkanah Settle, contributed to the "book" of at least one pageant—that of "The Triumphs of London," performed on Saturday, October 29, 1692, for the entertainment of the Right Honour-

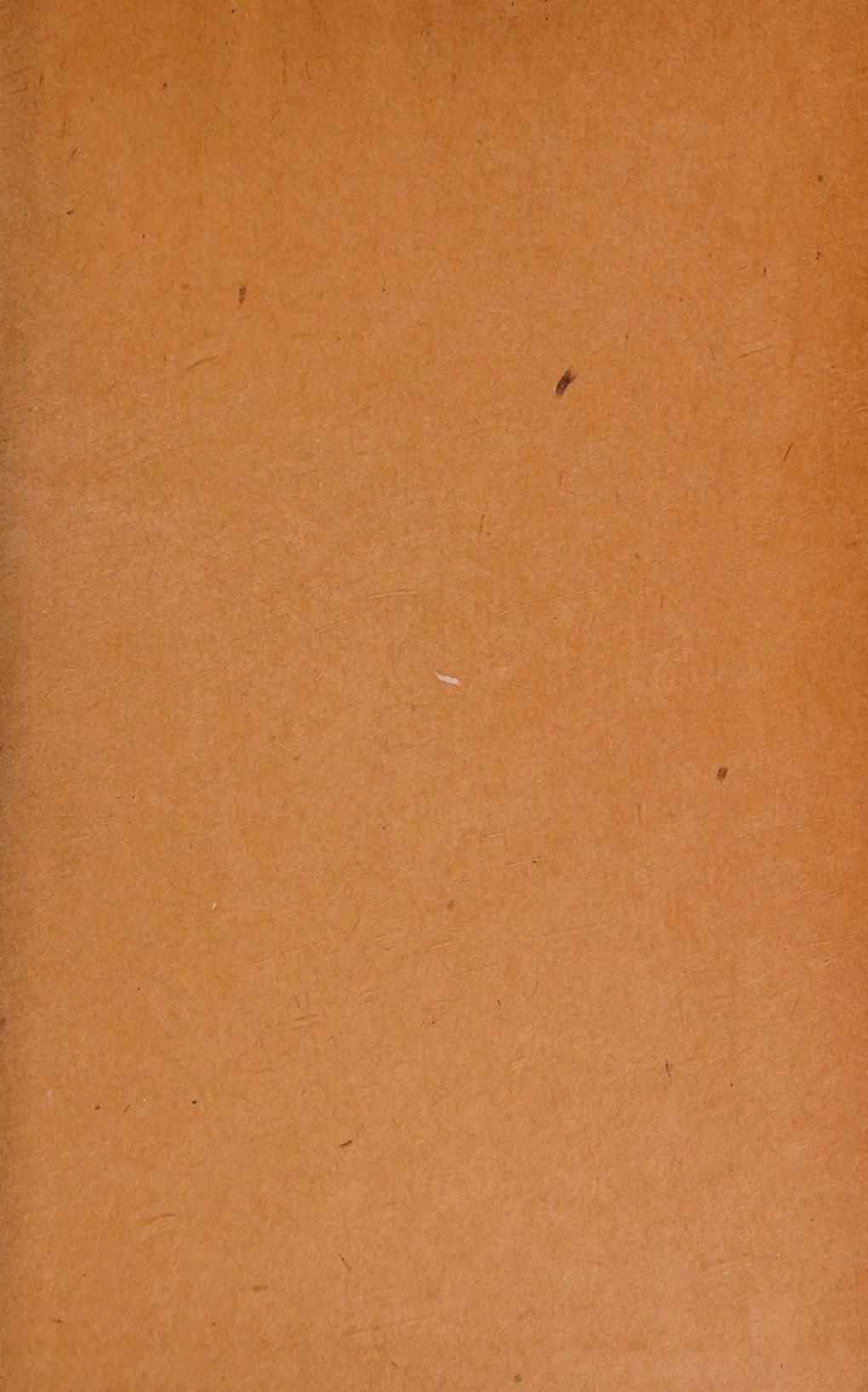
## THE GROCERY TRADE

able Sir John Fleet, Kt., the Lord Mayor. In his epistle dedicatory to the Worshipful Company of Grocers, at whose charges and costs the pageant was set forth, Settle lets his soul go in the following quaint, not to say bombastic, style:

“Gentlemen, The whole world is but your Garden, and nature your Confectioner, whilst all the Richest Sweets and spices, and all the Treasare of your own Phoenix Nest are so entirely Yours, that I may justly say, the softest Dew of Heaven falls for your sakes, and the warmest Beams of Day smile and cherish for you, whilst the noblest Fruits and Products of the Earth only furnish your Granary ; And if the Creation, since the start Gates of Edne, and the Flaming Sward before it, has any remains of Paradise left, 'tis only in your hands.”

Whether the breasts of the worthy grocers who listened to this astonishing tribute swelled with importance when it resounded in their ears we cannot say. It was probably not extraordinary when compared with the standard of taste of the time. Settle earned his guineas, and the grocers were satisfied, the populace was pleased, and the Lord Mayor felt, doubtless, duly honoured by the attention of not the least among his honourable fellow citizens.

END OF VOL. I





55 49

JUN  
1954

JUN  
1961

JUN  
1957 JUN  
1959

1951

1949

KV 40

